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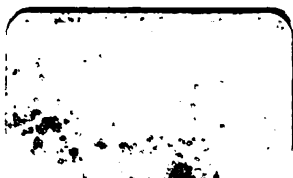
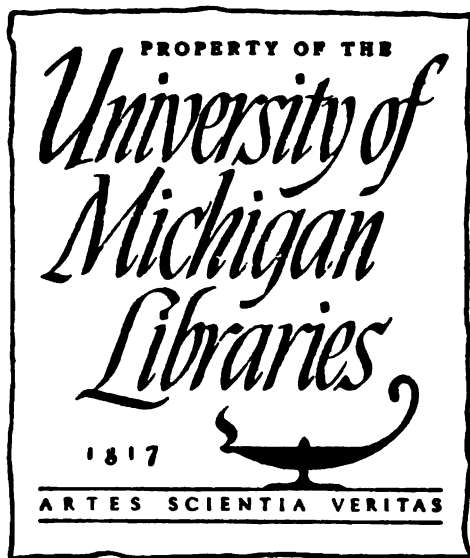
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# INAUGURAL ADDRESSES

BY

PRESIDENTS

OF

## THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

WITH

MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH'S SPEECH,

COMPILED BY

DINKER VISHNU GOKHALE, B.A.

~~~~~

"To Well-balanced Minds such a Gathering must appear the  
Soundest Triumph of British Administration and a Crown of Glory  
to the Great British Nation."

RAJAH SIR T. MADHAV ROW, K.C.S.I.

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To

**HIS HIGHNESS**

**SIR BUCHMESSUR SING, BAHADUR, K. I. I.,**

**THE MAHARAJAH OF DURBHANGA,**

**THIS VOLUME**

**IS**

**BY KIND PERMISSION**

**RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED**

**AS AN HUMBLE TOKEN OF ADMIRATION**

**FOR**

**His Highness's noble public spirit and  
patriotic devotion to the cause of the  
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.**



## PREFACE.

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The Indian National Congress has entered upon the second decade of its existence after having successfully passed through a chequered career of ridicule, abuse, and misrepresentation. It has survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty, and the interested opposition of those who do not scruple to sacrifice the interests of their own class and country for the attainment of their personal ends. If the movement were really a "nursery for sedition and rebellion," it would be a melancholy commentary upon British methods of administration in India. Happily for all, thoughtful Englishmen and Indians have from its very birth discovered in it the most legitimate and glorious outcome of British rule. In the ever memorable words of Sir William Hunter, who deserves the cordial thanks of Congressmen for his having explained its origin and aims to his countrymen at home, the Congress, the child of British rule and the product of our Schools and Universities, represents a political power in India which no Indian statesman and no Indian member of Parliament can afford to disregard. The movement may, therefore, be safely said to have lived down the opposition of even those of its critics, who, in the supposed interests of the British Empire, and only mindful of the passing exigencies of the hour, have sought to discredit it and its promoters by every means in their power, forgetful of the lessons of the past and blind to the issues of the future. The aims and objects of the



National Congress have nowhere been so ably and comprehensively set forth as in the Inaugural Addresses of its Presidents. They are the authoritative manifestoes of the Congress, and it can well afford to take its stand upon them for all time. The Congress movement is a notable embodiment of the various unifying influences which are welding the scattered units of the Indian population into one whole. It encloses a large futurity both for the people and their rulers, and it will depend upon the sagacity, sympathy, wisdom, and moderation of both, what rôle it is to play in the future annals of this country. The Presidential Addresses bear eloquent and convincing testimony to the fair-minded spirit in which the leading Congressmen have interpreted the duties and responsibilities of the rulers as well as the ruled. It is with a view to popularize those views and sentiments which actuate the leaders of Indian political thought, and to clear up misapprehensions that still exist in certain quarters that I offer to the public this volume of Addresses. Should the well-wishers of the Congress encourage this humble effort, I should be glad to render these weighty and responsible utterances accessible to the people in their own language, and thus further popularize a cause which deserves the earnest support and genuine sympathy of my countrymen.

BOMBAY,  
15th December, 1895.

D. V. GOKHALE.



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# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY  
MR. W. C. BONNERJI, PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT BOMBAY ON THE 28TH DECEMBER, 1885.

## I.

*"Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. . . . There were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him."*

The President-elect, in rising to acknowledge the honour done him, said he might well be proud of being thus called on to preside over the first National Assembly ever yet convened in India. Looking round he saw the representatives of all the important centres of the Bombay Presidency, Karachi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Poona, Bombay itself, and other less populous though still important towns ; almost every district in the Madras Presidency was represented, as well as the towns of Madras, Salem, Coimbatore and others. Of Bengal his friends and himself might to a certain extent be accepted as representatives, since although owing to a series of misfortunes, deaths, illnesses and the like, of which the meeting were already aware, Bengal was very inadequately represented so far as the numbers actually present were concerned, though, as the delegated exponents of educated native thought in Bengal, they might claim a consideration to which their numerical strength would hardly entitle them. Then there were the representatives of Lahore, Luck-

now, Agra, Allahabad, Benares, each representing political Associations collectively of very widespread influence. Besides these representatives who would take an actual part in the proceedings, he rejoiced to see present, as it were as *amici curiæ*, several of the most distinguished native officials of this country, whose presence would materially enhance the weight and the dignity of the proceedings. It was not merely provinces that were represented, almost all the political Associations in the Empire were represented by one or more of the gentlemen present, while as regards the press, the proprietors, editors or delegates of the *Mirror*, the *Hindu*, the *Indian Spectator*, the *Tribune*, and others showed conclusively, the universality of the feelings which had culminated in this great and memorable gathering. Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. He claimed for it an entirely representative character. It was true that, judged from the standard of the House of Commons, they were not representatives of the people of India in the sense the members of the House were representatives of the constituencies. But if community of sentiments, community of feelings, and community of wants enabled any one to speak on behalf of others, then assuredly they might justly claim to be the representatives of the people of India. It might be said that they were self-elected, but that was not so. The news that this Congress would be held had been known throughout the year in the different provinces of India, and they all knew that everywhere the news had been received with great satisfaction by the people at large, and though no formal elections had been held, the representatives had been selected by all the different Associations and

bodies, and he only wished that all thus selected had been able to attend, instead of their having now to lament the absence of many valued co-adjutors whose attendance had been unhappily barred by various unfortunate circumstances.

And now it seemed a fitting occasion for answering a question that had continually been asked in the world outside during the past few weeks, *viz.*, what the objects and aims of this great National Congress really were. He would not pretend to reply to this question exhaustively. The ensuing proceedings would, he believed, do this more effectually than any single speaker could hope to do; but he might say briefly that the objects of the Congress could for the most part be classed under the following heads:—

- (a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the parts of the Empire.
- (b) The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.
- (c) The authoritative record after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.
- (d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.

Surely there was nothing in these objects to which any sensible and unprejudiced man could possibly take exception, and yet on more than one occasion

remarks had been made by gentlemen, who should have been wiser, condemning the proposed Congress, as if it were a nest of conspirators and disloyalists. Let him say once for all, and in this he knew well after the long informal discussions that they all had amongst themselves on the previous day, that he was only expressing the sentiments of every gentleman present, that there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him. In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner questions of vital importance affecting their well being, they were following the only course by which the constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority. Much had been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India, and the whole country was truly grateful to her for it. She had given them order, she had given them railways, and above all she had given them the inestimable blessing of Western education. But a great deal still remained to be done. The more progress the people made in education and material prosperity, the greater would be the insight into political matters and the keener their desire for political advancement. He thought that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of the government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it. The discussions that would take place in this Congress would, he believed, be as advantageous to the ruling authorities as he was sure it would be to the people at large.

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# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

THE HON. DADABHAI NAOROJI, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## SECOND INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT CALCUTTA ON THE 27TH DECEMBER, 1886.

### II.

*"Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government? (Cries of 'No, no.') Or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (Cries of 'Yes, yes.') There could be but one answer, and you have already given."*

*"India was to be regarded as a trust placed by God in their hands, and in the due discharge of that trust they resolved that they would follow the 'plain path of duty,' as Mr. Macaulay called it; on that occasion he said, virtually, that he would rather see the people of India free and able to govern themselves, than that they should remain the bondsmen of Great Britain and the obsequious toadies of British officials."*

"I need not tell you how sincerely thankful I am to you for placing me in this position of honour. I at first thought that I was to be elevated to this proud position as a return for what might be considered as a compliment paid by us to Bengal when Mr. Bonnerji was elected President of the first Congress last year at Bombay. I can assure you, however, that that election was no mere



compliment to Bengal, but arose out of the simple fact that we regarded Mr. Bonnerji as a gentleman eminently qualified to take the place of President, and we installed him in that position in all sincerity as the proper man in the proper place. I now see, however, that this election of my humble self is not intended as a return of compliment, but that, as both proposer and seconder have said, you have been kind enough to select me because I am supposed to be really qualified to undertake the task. I hope it may prove so, and that I may be found really worthy of all the kind things said of me; but whether this be so or not, when such kind things are said by those who occupy such high positions amongst us, I must say I feel exceedingly proud and am very grateful to all for the honour thus done me. (*Loud cheering.*)

“Your late Chairman has heartily welcomed all the delegates who come from different parts of India, and with the same heartiness I return to him, and all our Bengal friends on my own behalf and on that of all the delegates from other Provinces, the most sincere thanks for the cordial manner in which we have been received. From what has been done already, and from what is in store for us during our short stay here, I have no doubt we shall carry away with us many and most pleasant reminiscences of our visit to Calcutta. (*Cheers.*)

“You will pardon me, and I beg your indulgence when I say that when I was asked only two days ago to become your President and to give an inaugural address, it was with no small trepidation that I agreed to undertake the task, and I hope that you will extend to me all that indulgence which my shortcomings may need. (*Loud cheers.*)

“The assemblage of such a Congress is an event of the utmost importance in Indian history. I ask whether in the most glorious days of Hindu rule, in the days of Rajahs like the great Vikram, you could imagine the possibility of a meeting of this kind, where even Hindus of all different provinces of the kingdom could have collected and spoken as one nation. Coming down to the later Empire of our friends, the Mahomedans, who probably ruled over a larger territory at one time than any Hindu monarch, would it have been, even in the days of the great Akbar himself, possible for a meeting like this to assemble composed of all classes and communities, all speaking one language, and all having uniform and high aspirations of their own.

“Well, then, what is it for which we are now met on this occasion? We have assembled to consider questions upon which depend our future, whether glorious or inglorious. It is our good fortune that we are under a rule which makes it possible for us to meet in this manner. (*Cheers.*) It is under the civilizing rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and without the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule, and British rule only. (*Loud cheers.*) Then I put the question plainly: Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government? (*Cries of ‘No, no.’*) Or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (*Cries of ‘Yes, yes.’*) There could be but one answer, and that you have already given, because we are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us,

of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. (*Cheers.*) Were it not for these blessings of British rule I could not have come here, as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed in my absence; nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed, within a few days, journeys which in former days would have occupied as many months. (*Cheers.*) These simple facts bring home to all of us at once some of those great and numberless blessings which British rule has conferred upon us. But there remain even greater blessings for which we have to be grateful. It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declarations made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God. (*Prolonged cheering.*) When we have to acknowledge so many blessings as flowing from British rule—and I could descant on them for hours, because it would simply be recounting to you the history of the British Empire in India—is it possible that an assembly like this, every one of whose members is fully impressed with the knowledge of these blessings, could meet for any purpose inimical to that rule to which we owe so much? (*Cheers.*)

“The thing is absurd. Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone (*cheers*); that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us, the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us

from darkness into light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not peoples for their kings; and this new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilization. (*Loud cheers.*) But the question is, do the Government believe us? Do they believe that we are really loyal to them; that we do truly appreciate and rely on British rule; that we veritably desire its permanent continuance; that our reason is satisfied and our sentimental feelings gratified as well as our self-interest? It would be a great gratification to us if we could see in the inauguration of a great movement like this Congress, that what we do really mean and desire is thoroughly and truly so understood by our rulers. I have the good fortune to be able to place before you testimony which cannot be questioned, from which you will see that some at least of the most distinguished of our rulers do believe that what we say is sincere; and that we do *not* want to subvert British rule; that our outspoken utterances are as much for their good as for our good. They do believe, as Lord Ripon said, that what is good for India is good for England. I will give you first the testimony as regards the educated classes which was given twenty-five years ago by Sir Bartle Frere. He possessed an intimate knowledge of the people of this country, and with regard to the educated portion of them he gave this testimony. He said: 'And now wherever I go I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government, and the most able co-adjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India, among the ranks of the educated natives.' This much at least is testimony to our sincerity, and

strongly corroborates our assertion that we, the educated classes, have become the true interpreters and mediators between the masses of our countrymen and our rulers. I shall now place before you the declaration of the Government of India itself, that they have confidence in the loyalty of the whole people, and do appreciate the sentiments of the educated classes in particular. I will read their very words. They say in a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State (8th June, 1880): 'But the people of India accept British rule without any need for appeal to arms, because we keep the peace and do justice, because we have done and are doing much material good to the country and the people, and because there is not inside or outside India any power that can adequately occupy our place.' Then they distinctly understand that we do believe the British power to be the only power that can, under existing circumstances, really keep the peace and advance our future progress. This is testimony as to the feeling of the whole people. But of the educated classes this despatch says: 'To the minds of at least the educated among the people of India—and the number is rapidly increasing—any idea of the subversion of British power is abhorrent, from the consciousness that it must result in the wildest anarchy and confusion.' (*Loud cheers.*)

"We can, therefore, proceed with the utmost serenity and with every confidence that our rulers do understand us; that they do understand our motives, and give credit to our expressions of loyalty, we need not in the least care for any impeachment of disloyalty or any charge of harbouring wild ideas, of subverting of British power that may be put forth

by ignorant, irresponsible or ill-disposed individuals or cliques. (*Loud cheers.*) We can, therefore, quietly, calmly and with entire confidence in our rulers, speak as freely as we please, but of course in that spirit of fairness and moderation which becomes wise and honest men, and in the tone which every gentleman, every reasonable being, would adopt when urging his rulers to make him some concession. (*Hear, hear.*) Now although, as I have said, the British Government have done much, very much for us, there is still a great deal more to be done if their noble work is to be fitly completed. They say this themselves; they show a desire to do what more may be required, and it is for us to ask for whatsoever, after due deliberation, we think that we ought to have. (*Cheers.*)

“ Therefore, having said thus much, and having cleared the ground so that we may proceed freely and in all confidence with the work of our Congress, I must at once come to the matter with which I should have commenced had I not purposely postponed it until I had explained the relations between ourselves and our rulers; and that is the most happy and auspicious occasion which the coming year is to bring us, *viz.*, the Jubilee of our good Queen-Empress' reign. (*Loud cheers.*) I am exceedingly glad that the Congress has thought it right to select this as the subject of the initial resolution, and in this to express, in humble but hearty terms, their congratulations to our Gracious Empress. (*Cheers.*) There is even more reason for us to congratulate ourselves on having for half a century enjoyed the rule of a Sovereign graced with every virtue, and truly worthy to reign over that vast Empire on which the sun never sets. (*Loud cheers.*) That she may live long, honoured

and beloved, to continue for yet many years that beneficial and enlightened rule with which she has so long reigned, must be the heartfelt prayer of every soul in India. (*Prolonged cheering.*)

"And here you must pardon me if I digress a moment from those subjects which this Congress proposes to discuss to one of those which we do not consider to fall within the legitimate sphere of its deliberations.

"It has been asserted that this Congress ought to take up questions of social reforms (*cheers and cries of yes, yes*), and our failure to do this has been urged as a reproach against us. Certainly no member of this National Congress is more alive to the necessity of social reforms than I am; but, gentlemen, for everything there are proper times, proper circumstances, proper parties, and proper places (*cheers*); we are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations, not to discuss social reforms, and if you blame us for ignoring these you should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruser problems of mathematics or metaphysics. But, besides this, there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom, even in the same provinces, customs, and social arrangements differ widely,—there are Mahomedans and Christians of various denominations, Parsees, Sikhs, Brahmos and what not—men, indeed, of each and all of those numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. (*Loud cheers.*) How can this gathering of *all* classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gather-

ing, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose the reforms needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses. But it does not follow that, because this national, political body does not presume to discuss social reforms, the delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay, in many cases far more deeply, interested in these questions than in those political questions we do discuss, or that those several communities whom those delegates represent are not doing their utmost to solve those complicated problems on which hinge the practical introduction of those reforms. Any man who has eyes and ears open must know what struggles towards higher and better things are going on in every community: and it could not be otherwise with the noble education we are receiving. Once you begin to think about your own actions, your duties and responsibilities to yourself, your neighbours and your nation, you cannot avoid looking round and observing much that is wrong amongst you; and we know as a fact that each community is now doing its best according to its lights and the progress that it has made in education. I need not, I think, particularise. The Mahomedans know what is being done by persons of their community to push on the education their brethren so much need; the Hindus are everywhere doing what they *can* to reform those social institutions which they think require improvement. There is not one single community here represented of which the best and ablest men do not feel that



much has to be done to improve the social, moral, religious status of their brethren, and in which, as a fact, they are not striving to effect gradually those needful improvements; but these are essentially matters too delicate for a stranger's handling—matters which must be left to the guidance of those who alone fully understand them in all their bearings, and which are wholly unsuited to discussion in an assemblage like this in which all classes are intermingled. (*Loud cheers.*)

“I shall now refer briefly to the work of the former Congress. Since it met last year, about this time, some progress, I am glad to say, has been made, and that is an encouragement and a proof that, if we do really ask what is right and reasonable, we may be sure that, sooner or later, the British Government will actually give what we ask for. We should therefore persevere, having confidence in the conscience of England, and resting assured that the English nation will grudge no sacrifice to prove the sincerity of their desire to do whatever is just and right. (*Cheers.*)

“Our first request at the last Congress was for the constitution of a Royal Commission. Unfortunately the authorities in England have not seen their way to grant a Royal Commission. They say it will upset the authorities here; that it will interfere with the prestige and control of the Government here. I think that this is a very poor compliment to our rulers on this side. If I understand a man like Lord Dufferin, of such vast experience in administration, knowing, as he does, what it is to rule an empire, it would be impossible for him to be daunted and frightened by a commission making enquiries here. I think this argument a very poor one, and we must once more say

that to the inhabitants of India a Parliamentary Committee taking evidence in England alone can never be satisfactory, for the simple reason that what the Committee will learn by the ear will never enable them to understand what they ought to see with their eyes if they are to realize what the evidence of the witnesses really means. Still, however, it is so far satisfactory that, notwithstanding the change of Government and the vicissitudes which this poor Parliamentary Committee has undergone, it is the intention of Parliament that under any and all circumstances a Committee shall be appointed. At the same time this Committee *in futuro* ties the hands of the authorities here to a large extent and prevents us from saying all we do really want.

“ Another resolution on which we must report some progress was to the effect that the N.-W. Provinces and the Punjab ought also to have Legislative Councils of their own. We know that the Government has just given a Legislative Council to the N.-W. Provinces, and we hope that this progress may extend further and satisfy our wishes as to other provinces also.

“ The fourth resolution had regard to the Service question. In this matter we really seem to have made some distinct progress. The Public Service Commission is now sitting, and if one thing more than another can prove that the Government is sincere in its desire to do something for us, this appointment of such a Commission is that thing. You perhaps remember the words which our noble Viceroy used at Poona. He said : ‘ However, I will say that from first to last I have been a strong advocate for the appointment of a Committee or Commission of this sort,

and that when succeeding Governments in England changed, I have on each occasion warmly impressed upon the Secretary of State the necessity of persevering in the nomination of a Commission. I am happy to think that in response to my earnest representations on the subject, Her Majesty's present Ministers have determined to take action. I consequently do not really see what more, during the short period I have been amongst you, the Government of India could have done for that most important and burning question which was perpetually agitating your mind, and was being put forward by the natives as an alleged injustice done to the educated native classes of this country in not allowing them adequate employments in the Public Service. I do not think you can point out to me any other question which so occupied public attention or was nearer to the hearts of your people. Now the door to inquiry has been opened, and it only remains for you, by the force of logic of your representations and of the evidence you may be able to submit, to make good your case; if you succeed in doing so, all I can say is, that nobody will be better pleased than myself. In regard to other matters which have been equally prominent in your newspapers and your addresses, and which have been so constantly discussed by your associations, I have also done my best to secure for you an ample investigation.'

" There we have his own words as to his intentions and the efforts he made to get this Commission. This should convince us of his good faith and sympathy with us. When I think of Lord Dufferin, not only as our present Viceroy, but bearing in mind all we know of him in his past career, I should he-

sitate to believe that he could be a man devoid of the deepest sympathy with any people struggling to advance and improve their political condition. Some of you may remember one or two extracts which I gave in my Holborn Town Hall speech from Lord Dufferin's letters to the *Times*, and I cannot conceive that a person of such warm sympathies could fail to sympathise with us. But I may say this much that, feeling as I naturally do some interest about the views and intentions of our Viceroy and Governors, I have had the opportunity of getting some information from friends on whom I can rely and who are in a position to know the truth; and I am able to say in the words of one of these friends that 'the Viceroy's instincts are eminently liberal, and he regards with neither jealousy nor alarm the desire of the educated classes to be allowed a larger share in the administration of their own affairs. Indeed he considers it very creditable to them that they should do so.' As Viceroy he has to consider all sides of a question from the ruler's point of view, and to act as he thinks safe and proper. But we may be sure that we have his deep and very genuine sympathy, and we may fairly claim and expect much good at his hands.

"But yet further I would enquire whether the intentions of the Secretary of State for India and of the other home authorities are equally favourable to our claims. The resolution on its very face tells us what the intention of the Secretary of State is. It says: 'In regard to its object the Commission would, broadly speaking, be required to devise a scheme which may reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality, and to do full justice to the

claims of natives of India to a higher and more extensive employment in the Public Service.'

"There we have the highest authority making a declaration that he desires to do full justice to the claims of the natives of India. Now our only reply is that we are thankful for the enquiry, and we hope that we may be able to satisfy all, that what we ask is both reasonable and right.

"As another proof of the intentions of our British rulers, as far back as 53 years ago, when the natives of India did not themselves fully understand their rights, the statesmen of England of their own free will decided what the policy of England ought to be towards India. Long and important was the debate; the question was discussed from all points of view; the danger of giving political power to the people, the insufficiency of their capacity and other considerations were all fully weighed, and the conclusion was come to in unmistakable and unambiguous terms, that the policy of British rule should be a policy of justice (*cheers*), the policy of the advancement of one-sixth of the human race. (*Cheers.*) India was to be regarded as a trust placed by God in their hands, and in the due discharge of that trust they resolved that they would follow the 'plain path of duty,' as Mr. Macaulay called it; on that occasion he said, virtually, that he would rather see the people of India free and able to govern themselves, than that they should remain the bondsmen of Great Britain and the obsequious toadies of British officials. (*Cheers.*) This was the essence of the policy of 1833, and in the Act of that year it was laid down: 'That no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason only of his

religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.' (*Prolonged cheering.*)

"We do not—we could not—ask for more than this; and all we have to press upon the Commission and Government is that they should now honestly grant us in practice here what Great Britain freely conceded to us 50 years ago, when we ourselves were too little enlightened even to ask for it. (*Loud cheers.*)

"We next passed through a time of trouble, and the British arms were triumphant. When they had completely surmounted all their difficulties, and completely vanquished all their adversaries, the English nation came forward, animated by the same high and noble resolves as before, and gave us that glorious proclamation which we should for ever prize and reverence as our Magna Charta—greater even than the Charter of 1833. I need not repeat that glorious proclamation now, for it is engraven on all your hearts (*loud cheers*); but it constitutes such a grand and glorious charter of our liberties that I think every child as it begins to gather intelligence and to lisp its mother-tongue ought to be made to commit it to memory. (*Cheers.*) In that proclamation we have again a confirmation of the policy of 1833 and something more. In it are embodied the germs of all that we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter. (*Cheers.*) We have only to go before the Government and the Commission now sitting and repeat it, and say that all we want is only what has already been granted to us in set terms by that proclamation, and that all we now ask for is that the great and generous concessions therein made to us in words shall actually be made ours by deeds. (*Loud cheers.*) I

will not, however, enter into further details, for it is a subject on which I should be led into speaking for hours, and even then I should fail to convey to you an adequate idea of all that is in my heart. I have said enough to show our rulers that our case is complete and has been made out by themselves. (*Cheers.*) It is enough for me, therefore, to stop at this point.

“Another resolution is the improvement and enlargement of the Legislative Councils, and the introduction into them of an elective element, but that is one on which my predecessor in the chair has so ably descanted that I do not think I should take up more of your time with it. I need only say that in this matter we hope to make a further advance, and shall try to place before our rulers what we consider a possible scheme for the introduction of an elective element into the Legislative Councils. I need not say that if this representation is introduced, the greatest benefit will be conferred upon the Government itself, because at present whatever Acts they pass that do not quite please us, we, whether rightly or wrongly, grumble and grumble against the Government, and the Government only. It is true that we have some of our own people in the Councils. But we have no right to demand any explanation, even from them; they are not our representatives, and the Government cannot relieve themselves from any dissatisfaction we may feel against any law we don't like. If our own representatives make a mistake and get a law passed which we do not want, the Government at any rate will escape the greater portion of the consequent unpopularity. They will say—here are your own representatives; we believed that they represented your wishes, and we passed the law. On the other hand, with all

the intelligence, all the superior knowledge of the English officials, let them come as angels from heaven, it is impossible for them to enter into the feelings of the people, and feel as they feel, and enter into their minds. (*Cheers.*) It is not any disparagement of them, but in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. If you have, therefore, your representatives to represent your feelings, you will then have an opportunity of getting something which is congenial and satisfactory to yourselves; and what will be satisfactory to you must also be satisfactory to and good for the Government itself. (*Cheers.*)

"This brings me also to the point of representation in Parliament. All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration here are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, Legislative Councils, the Services,—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen who are in Parliament themselves; they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India.

"One of the questions which will be placed before this Congress and will be discussed by them is the deep sympathy which this Congress feels for the poverty of the people. It is often understood and thought that when we struggle for admission into the Services it is simply to gratify the aspirations of the few educated. But if you examine this question thoroughly, you will find that this matter of the public



services will go far to settle the problem of the poverty of the Indian people. One thing I congratulate myself upon. I don't trouble you with any testimony about the poverty of India. You have the testimony of Sir Evelyn Baring given only a couple of years ago, who told us in plain terms that the people of India were extremely poor, and also of the present Finance Minister who repeats those words. But amongst the several causes which are at the bottom of our sufferings, this one, and that the most important cause, is beginning to be realized by our rulers, and that is a step of the most hopeful and promising kind. In the discussion about the currency, the Secretary of State for India, in a letter to the Treasury of the 26th January, 1886, makes certain remarks which show that our rulers now begin to understand and to try to grapple with the problem, and are not, ostrich-like, shutting their eyes to it. I was laughed at when I first mooted the question of the poverty of India, and assigned as one of its causes the employment of an expensive foreign agency. But now the highest authority emphasizes this view. The Secretary of State, in the letter just referred to, said: 'The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change, which is more specially exhibited towards new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices, and form so large a part of the Army. The impatience of new taxation which would have to be borne, wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to

charges arising outside of the country, would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of, or concern in, the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order.'

"We may be sure that the public conscience of England will ask why the natives of India after a hundred years of British rule are so poor; and as John Bull, in a cartoon in *Punch* is represented as doing, will wonder that India is a beggar when he thought she had a mint of money.

"Unfortunately this idea of India's wealth is utterly delusive, and if a proper system of representation in the Councils be conceded, our representatives will then be able to make clear to these Councils and to our rulers those causes which are operating to undermine our wealth and prosperity, and guide the Government to the proper remedies for the greatest of all evils—the poverty of the masses. All the benefits we have derived from British rule, all the noble projects of our British rulers, will go for nothing if after all the country is to continue sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of destitution. At one time I was denounced as a pessimist, but now that we have it on the authority of our rulers themselves that we are *very* poor, it has become the right, as well as the duty, of this Congress to set forth its convictions, both as to this widespread destitution and the primary steps needful for its alleviation. Nothing is more dear to the heart of England—and I speak from actual knowledge—than India's welfare; and if we only speak out loud enough, and persistently enough, to

reach that busy heart, we shall not speak in vain. (*Prolonged cheering.*) There will be several other questions brought before the Congress at their Committee meetings during the next three days, and I am sure from the names of the delegates, as far as I am informed, that they will prosecute their deliberations with all possible moderation. I am sure that they will fully appreciate the benefits of the rule under which they live, while the fact that our rulers are willing to do whatever we can show them to be necessary for our welfare, should be enough to encourage all in the work. I do not know that I need now detain you with any further remarks. You have now some idea of what progress has been made in respect of the matters which were discussed last year. I hope we may congratulate ourselves next year that we have made further progress in attaining the objects alike of the past year's resolutions and those we may this year pass. I for one am hopeful that, if we are only true to ourselves, if we only do justice to ourselves and the noble education which has been given to us by our rulers and speak freely, with the freedom of speech which has been granted to us, we may fairly expect our Government to listen to us and to grant us our reasonable demands. (*Loud cheers.*)

"I will conclude this short address by repeating my sincere thanks to all of you for having placed me in this honourable position, and by again returning thanks to our Bengal brethren on behalf of all the delegates whom they have so cordially welcomed here."

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING SPEECH.

THE PRESIDENT said: "In responding to the vote of thanks, which you have so kindly accorded to me, I hope the meeting will allow me to say that my expectations as to the admirable conduct of this large assembly have been thoroughly fulfilled and more than fulfilled. I am only speaking tamely, I fear, when I say that, from first to last, nothing could possibly have been more honourable to our country than the conduct of all concerned or than the spirit that has pervaded the entire assemblage. In the heat of argument, under that greatest of all stimuli, patriotic enthusiasm, not one word, I believe, has escaped a single speaker that he need wish unspoken. Kindness, courtesy, and a spirit of cheerful mutual concession have pervaded our proceedings, which, but for this, could never have reached this happy and successful termination. (*Loud cheers.*) You are pleased to thank me, but it is for me rather to thank you, for had it not been for the noble spirit in which each and all of you have co-operated in the work and for the support which you have so heartily afforded me in respect of every proposition, which has come before the Congress, I could never have succeeded in thus bringing to a successful close the important business that devolved upon us. (*Cheers.*) I heartily, therefore, thank you one and all for having enabled me to perform my duty and for having made it so easy for me to do it. (*Loud cheers.*)

"There is, however, just one point to which I ought, perhaps, to refer more particularly, and that is to the spirit of fairness and moderation and respect towards the Government which has characterized

your proceedings from the beginning to the end. I need hardly say how gratified I have been to observe how thoroughly all have seemed to be imbued with that spirit. Not only is it to our interest that it should be so, but it is what the Government, after all they have done for us, have a just right to expect from us. (*Cheers.*) And I only hope that the example which this great assemblage has set in this respect will be followed, not only at all future meetings of the Congress, not only by all and every Association throughout the country, but also by the entire Indian press, some members of which, under the influence of the bad example too often set to them by a portion of the Anglo-Indian press, have at times, it must be confessed, transgressed in this respect. (*Hear, hear.*) If we really desire to be respected, if we wish our requests to be attended to, if we honestly expect that the English nation will do its duty toward us, we must prove ourselves worthy by showing that we are never unreasonable, never violent, never uncharitable. We must show that we are earnest, but temperate, cognizant of our own rights, but respectful of those of others; expecting the fairest constructions of our own acts and motives, and conceding these to those of others; that, in a word, whatever our status in life, high or low, rich or poor, we have become gentlemen in the highest sense of the word. Unless we are and can prove ourselves gentlemen in this highest, noblest sense, I do not know that we are worthy to receive the concessions for which we are pressing. (*Loud cheers.*) I do not think I need trouble the Congress with any further remarks. I will simply say once more: I thank you. I thank you, for myself, for

the honour you have done me in choosing me as President, and for the generous kindness with which you have upheld me in the performance of the responsible duties of that high position, and I thank you on behalf of all your countrymen—on behalf of posterity—for the noble manner in which, at this great Congress—which history will not readily forget—you have upheld the credit, the character, the dignity of our beloved India. (*Long and enthusiastic cheering.*)

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. Some words like "The" and "and" are visible.

A single, long, curved line of handwriting, possibly a signature or a large flourish, extending from the middle right towards the bottom right corner.

# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. BUDRUDIN TYABJI, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## THIRD INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT MADRAS ON THE 27TH DECEMBER, 1887.

### III.

*"I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity, but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities of India,—be they Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsees, or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights which are for the common benefit of us all, and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us."*

RAJAH SIR T. MADHAVA RAO AND GENTLEMEN,—  
I thank you most sincerely for the very great honour you have done me by electing me President of this great national assembly. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, it is impossible not to feel proud of the great distinction you have thus conferred upon me, the greatest distinction which it is in your power to confer upon any one of your countrymen. (*Loud and continued applause.*) Gentlemen, I have had the honour of witnessing great public meetings both in Bombay and elsewhere, but it is quite a novel sensation for me to appear before a meeting of this description—a meeting composed



not merely of the representatives of any one city or even of one province, but of the whole of the vast continent of India—representing not any one class or interest, but all classes (*hear, hear and applause*) and all interests of the almost innumerable different communities that constitute the people of India. (*Applause.*)

Gentlemen, I had not the good fortune to be present at the proceedings of the first Congress, held in Bombay in 1885, nor had I the good fortune to take a part in the deliberations of the second Congress, held in Calcutta last year. But, gentlemen, I have carefully read the proceedings of both those Congresses, and I have no hesitation in declaring that they display an amount of talent, wisdom, and eloquence of which we have every reason to be proud. (*Applause.*)

Gentlemen, from the proceedings of the two past Congresses, I think we are fairly entitled to hope that the proceedings of this present Congress will not only be marked by those virtues, but by that moderation and by that sobriety of judgment which is the offspring of political wisdom and political experience. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, all the friends and well-wishers of India, and all those who take an interest in watching over the progress and prosperity of our people, have every reason to rejoice at the increasing success of each succeeding Congress. At the first Congress in Bombay, in 1885, we had less than 100 representatives from the different parts of India, in the second Congress, at Calcutta, in 1886, we had as many as 440 representatives, while at this Congress, I believe, we have over 600 delegates (*applause*) representing all the different parts and all the different communities of this great empire. I think, then,

gentlemen, that we are fairly entitled to say that this is a truly representative national gathering. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) Indeed, if that tentative form of representative institutions, which has so often been asked for from Government, were granted to us, I have not the smallest doubt but that many of the gentlemen I now have the honour of addressing would be elected by their respective constituencies to represent their interests. (*Applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Mus-sulman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of the two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true, and applies only to one particular part of India, and is, moreover, due to certain special, local and temporary causes (*hear, hear and applause*), and in the second place, no such reproach can, I think, with any show of justice, be urged against this present Congress (*applause*), and, gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive which has induced me, in the present state of my health, to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire, on my part, to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity, but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay (*loud applause*), do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities of India,—be they Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsees, or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general

reforms, those great general rights which are for the common benefit of us all (*hear, hear and applause*), and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us.

Gentlemen, it is undoubtedly true that each one of our great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount, but so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India—such as those which alone are discussed by this Congress—are concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Mussulmans should not work shoulder to shoulder (*hear, hear and applause*) with their fellow-countrymen, of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we, in the Bombay Presidency, have always acted, and from the number, the character, the position and the attainments of Mussulman delegates from the Bengal Presidency and from the Presidency of Madras, as well as from the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, I have not the smallest doubt that this is also the view held, with but few, though, perhaps, important exceptions, by the leaders of the Mussulman communities throughout the whole of India. (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been urged as a slur upon our loyalty that this Congress is composed of what are called the educated natives of India. Now, if by this it is intended to be conveyed, that we are merely a crowd of people with nothing but our education to commend us, if it is intended to be conveyed that the gentry, the nobility and the aristocracy of the land have kept aloof from us, I can only meet that assertion by

the most direct and the most absolute denial. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) To any person who made that assertion I should feel inclined to say, come with me into this Hall (*applause*) and look around you (*applause*), and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not only of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this Hall. (*Applause.*) But, gentlemen, if no such insinuation is intended to be made, I should only say that I am happy to think that this Congress does consist of the educated natives of India. (*Hear, hear.*)

Gentlemen, I, for one, am proud to be called not only educated but a "native" of this country. (*Applause and hear, hear.*) And, gentlemen, I should like to know where among all the millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British empire than among these educated natives. (*Loud and continued applause.*) Gentlemen, to be a true and a sincere friend of the British Government, it is necessary that one should be in a position to appreciate the great blessings which that Government has conferred upon us, and I should like to know who is in a better position to appreciate these blessings—the ignorant peasants or the educated natives? Who, for instance, will better appreciate the advantages of good roads, railways, telegraphs and post offices, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, good laws and impartial courts of justice?—the educated natives or the ignorant peasants of this country? (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, if there ever were to arise—which God forbid—any great struggle between Russia and Great Britain for supremacy in this country—who is more likely

to judge better of the relative merits of the two empires? (*Hear, hear.*) Again, I say, gentlemen, that in these matters it is the educated natives that are best qualified to judge, because it is we who know and are best able to appreciate, for instance, the blessings of the right of public meeting, the liberty of action and of speech, and high education which we enjoy under Great Britain, whereas, probably, under Russia we should have nothing but a haughty and despotic Government whose chief glory would consist in vast military organization, aggression upon our neighbours, and great military exploits. (*Applause.*)

No, gentlemen, let our opponents say what they please, we, the educated natives, by the mere force of our education, must be the best appreciators of the blessings of a civilized and enlightened Government, and, therefore, in our own interests, the best and staunchest supporters of the British Government in India. (*Applause.*) But, gentlemen, do those who thus charge us with disloyalty stop for a moment to consider the full meaning and effect of their argument,—do they realise the full import and significance of the assertion they make? Do they understand that, in charging us with disloyalty, they are, in reality, condemning and denouncing the very government which it is their intention to support? (*Hear, hear and loud and continued applause.*) For, gentlemen, when they say that the educated natives of India are disloyal, what does it mean? It means this: that in the opinion of the educated natives,—that is to say, of all the men of light and leading, all those who have received a sound, liberal and enlightened education, all those who are acquainted with the history of their own country and with the nature of the present and

past governments, that in the opinion of all these—the English Government is so bad that it has deserved to forfeit the confidence and the loyalty of the thinking part of the population. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) Now, gentlemen, is it conceivable that a more frightful and unjust condemnation of the British Government can be pronounced than is implied in this charge of disloyalty against the educated natives of India? Gentlemen, if this charge were brought by some bitter enemies of Great Britain, if it were brought by the Russians, for example, I could understand it. (*Hear, hear.*) But it is almost beyond my comprehension that it should come, not from enemies, but from the supposed friends of the British Government (*loud laughter and hear, hear*), not from the Russians, but from Englishmen (*hear, hear*), who presumably want, not to destroy, but to support their Government! I say it surpasses my comprehension. (*Loud applause.*) Gentlemen, just consider for a moment the effect of this reckless allegation upon the uneducated millions of the inhabitants of this country, upon the hordes of the Russians in the North, and upon the enlightened nations of Europe! I say, therefore, that the conduct of those who thus recklessly charge us with disloyalty resembles the conduct of the “foolish woodman” who was lopping off the very branch of the tree upon which he was standing (*hear, hear, loud applause, and loud laughter*) unconscious that the destruction of the branch meant the destruction of himself. (*Applause and laughter.*)

Happily, however, gentlemen, this allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. It is as unjust to us as it is unjust to the Government it impeaches. But though, gentlemen, I maintain that the

educated natives as a class are loyal to the backbone (*hear, hear*), I must yet admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, not always cautious, in the language they employ. I must admit that some of them do sometimes afford openings for hostile criticisms, and I must say that I have myself observed in some of the Indian newspapers and in the speeches of public speakers, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to the conclusion that they have not fully realised the distinction between license and liberty; that they have not wholly grasped the lesson, that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges. (*Hear, hear.*) And, therefore, gentlemen, I trust that not only during the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions, we shall ever bear in mind and ever impress upon our countrymen that, if we are to enjoy the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and liberty of the press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, by our moderation, by the justness of our criticisms, that we fully deserve these—the greatest blessings which an enlightened Government can confer upon its subjects. (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been sometimes urged that Europeans in this country do not fully sympathise with the just aspirations of the natives of India. In the first place, this is not universally true, because I have the good fortune to know many Europeans than whom truer or more devoted friends of India do not breathe on the face of the earth. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) And, in the second place, we must be prepared to make very considerable allowances for our European fellow-subjects, because their position

in this country is surrounded by difficult and complicated questions, not merely of a political but of a social character, which tend more or less to keep the two communities asunder in spite of the best efforts of the leaders of European no less than of native society. Gentlemen, so long as our European friends come to this country as merely temporary residents, so long as they come here merely for the purposes of trade, commerce or of a profession, so long as they do not look upon India as a country in whose welfare they are permanently interested, so long it will be impossible for us to expect that the majority of the Europeans should fraternize with us upon all great public questions (*hear, hear*), and it has, therefore, always seemed to me that one of the greatest, the most difficult, the most complicated and at the same time one of the most important problems to be solved is how to make our European friends look upon India as in some sense their own country, even by adoption. For, gentlemen, if we could but induce our retired merchants, engineers, doctors, solicitors, barristers, judges and civilians to make India permanently their home (*hear, hear and applause*), what an amount of talent and ability, political experience and ripe judgment we should retain in India, for the benefit of us all. (*Applause.*) All those great questions in regard to the financial drain on India and those questions arising from jealousy of races and the rivalry for public employment would at once disappear. And when we speak of the poverty of India, because of the draining away of vast sums of money from India to England, it has always seemed to me strange that so little thought should be bestowed upon the question of the poverty of our resources



caused by the drain of so many men of public, political and intellectual eminence from our shores every year. (*Applause.*)

Now, gentlemen, one word as to the scope of our action and deliberations. It has been urged—solemnly urged—as an objection against our proceedings—that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform. But, gentlemen, this matter has already been fully dealt with by my friend, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji,\* who presided over your deliberations last year. And I must confess that the objection seems to me strange seeing that this Congress is composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of social reform must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community of India only,—and, therefore, gentlemen, it seems to me, that although we, Mussulmans, have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsee friends have theirs, yet these questions can be best dealt with by the leaders of the particular communities to which they relate. (*Applause.*) I therefore think, gentlemen, that the only wise, and, indeed the only possible course we can adopt is to confine our discussions to such questions as affect the whole of India at large, and to abstain from the discussion of questions that affect a particular part or a particular community only. (*Loud applause.*)

Gentlemen, I do not, at present at least, propose to say anything upon the various problems that will

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\* *Vide* pp. 12-14.

be submitted to you for your consideration. I have no doubt that the questions will be discussed in a manner and in a spirit that will reflect credit upon us all. I will only say this: be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions and you may rest assured that any propositions you may make to our rulers will be received with that benign consideration which is the characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government. (*Applause.*) And now, gentlemen, I fear I have already trespassed (*voices of "no, no"*) too long upon your time. Before I sit down, I will once more offer to you my thanks from the very bottom of my heart for the very great honour you have done me, and I pray to God that I may be enabled, in some measure, at least, to deserve your approbation and justify the choice you have made and the confidence you have reposed in me. (*Loud applause.*) Gentlemen, I wish this Congress and all succeeding Congresses every success and every prosperity. (*Applause.*)

I am very glad to see the representatives of so many different communities and parts of India gathered together this afternoon before us. This, in itself, gentlemen, is no small advantage that we, as representatives of the different parts of India, should have the opportunity of meeting and discussing together the various problems that affect us all. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, I will not take up much more of your time. I say, as our Chairman, Sir T. Madhava Rao, has said: I welcome you here, but at the same time I cannot help expressing my deep regret—a regret that I know you all share—that on this occasion we are deprived of the aid and counsel of some of those

gentlemen who laboured most earnestly for, and who graced with their presence, the Congress on previous occasions, and who have now, all too soon for their country's sake, passed from amongst us. Among the friends we have lost are Dr. Athalye, of Bombay and Madras, who took such an energetic part in the first Congress, held in Bombay, in the year 1885, and Mr. Girija Bhusan Mookerjee, whom you all know, and whom all who knew loved and respected, and who was one of the most active workers for the Congress, held in Calcutta last year. Then, too, we have to mourn the loss of Mr. Dayaram Jethmall, the founder of the National Party in Sind, and a distinguished gentleman belonging to this Presidency, (though I fear I am not in a position to pronounce his name correctly), Mr. Singaraju Venkata Subbaroyudu, of Masulipatam. But to all these gentlemen, of whose assistance and guidance we have been deprived, we must owe a lasting debt of gratitude. They, in their life time, spared no pains to make the Congress, either in Bombay or Calcutta, a success, as far as in their power lay, and it only remains for us, while cherishing their memories, to emulate their example. (*Loud and continued applause.*)

Gentlemen, in addition to those of you, who have been able to come to Madras, we have received numerous letters and telegrams from Associations of various kinds, and from a large number of representative men in other parts of India, who, for some reason or other, have been debarred from being represented at, or attending, this Congress. We have received telegrams from Hyderabad, from all kinds of places in the Madras Presidency,—the names of which I shall not venture to pronounce,—from Kurrachee,

Calcutta, Dehra Dhun, Sambhur, Bangalore, Dacca, from His Highness the Maharajah of Durbungah, Messrs. Lal Mohun and Manmohan Ghose, Mr. Telang, and a vast number of other places and persons too numerous for me to pretend to recapitulate. There are no less than sixty odd telegrams alone placed before me. But, gentlemen, there is one among those which I am particularly anxious to bring to your notice, and that is from our old and distinguished friend, Mr. Atkins (*laughter*), whom, by name at least, I have not the smallest doubt, every one of us here perfectly knows. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, in his telegram he wishes this Congress and all future Congresses perfect success. (*Applause.*) He wishes that the unity of the different communities should be promoted and that the objects which we all have at heart should be attained. (*Applause.*) I think you will be of opinion that that is a very good omen. We want the assistance not only of representative men of the Indian communities, but we also want the assistance of Europeans. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, while we are attempting to learn some few lessons in the art of self-government, our European friends have inherited that art from their forefathers after centuries of experience, and it cannot be doubted that if we can induce our European friends to co-operate with us in these various political matters, which, in point of fact, affect them no less than they affect us, it cannot, I say, be doubted that it will conduce to the advantage, not only of ourselves, but of the European community also. (*Loud applause.*)



# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. GEORGE YULE, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## FOURTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT ALLAHABAD ON THE 26TH DECEMBER, 1888.

### IV.

*"The 650 odd members, who were to be the palladium of India's rights and liberties, have thrown 'the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence' back upon the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best"*

GENTLEMEN,—When I was asked some time ago to allow myself to be nominated for the position to which you have now elected me, I had some hesitation in giving my assent to the request. It was an unexpected, and with all due deference to this judgment of my too indulgent friends, it was an undeserved compliment. That, however, is a kind of objection which can always and very easily be got over. But I knew your assemblies were very large, and I also know that it is a most desirable quality in the President of such a gathering to have a voice strong enough to reach the remotest listener. I feared I had no such voice. For that reason chiefly, and for others that need not be mentioned, I felt, I hope with unaffected diffidence, that I was scarcely the man to follow those magnificent speakers who had

occupied the chair at previous meetings of the Congress. Nevertheless, quickened by my warm sympathies with the main objects of the Congress, I am here at your call, for better or for worse. (*Cheers.*)

And now, gentlemen, I come at once to the business that lies before us. Why are we here? What do we want? What are we striving after? In the resolutions that are to be submitted to you there are some reforms embodied, which state our wants, which set forth our views, and indicate the direction in which our thoughts are travelling. I think I am right, however, in saying that all these do not occupy exactly the same place in our regards. About one or two of them there is more or less of doubt as to their value or importance. But there is one of them respecting which there is the most complete and perfect unanimity of opinion. I refer to the reform of the Legislative Councils. I myself regard this one as the most important of all. Each of the other reforms begins and ends with itself. The reform of the Councils is not only in itself good, but it has the additional virtue of being the best of all instruments for obtaining other reforms that further experience and our growing wants may lead us to desire. (*Loud cheers.*) With your permission I will confine the observations I have to make to this one question. In doing so, it seems to me to be needful, first of all, to state some of the facts connected with the origin of the Bill under which the affairs of India are at present administered. When the sole government of this country was taken over by the Crown in 1858, it fell to the lot of Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, to introduce into the House of Commons a Bill which was afterwards known as India Bill

No. 1. The main provisions of this Bill were, that the Government of India was to vest in a Viceroy and Council in India, and in a Council of eight retired Indian officials presided over by a Secretary of State in London. The proceedings of these two separate bodies, each of whom had certain independent responsibilities, were to be subject to the review and final decision of the House of Commons. The chief objection to this Bill was, that no provision was made for the representation of the people of the country. Mr. Disraeli, who was leader of the Opposition, objected to it on the ground of the insufficient check which it provided; and he said that with such Councils as those proposed, "you could not be sure that the inhabitants of India would be able to obtain that redress for the grievances under which they suffered, that English protection ought to insure." Almost immediately after the introduction of the Bill, Lord Palmerston was defeated upon a side question, and Lord Derby became Prime Minister, with Mr. Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons. No time was lost by the new Ministry in introducing India Bill No. 2. Mr. Disraeli dwelt upon the desirability of having the representative principle applied to the Government of the country, and his scheme was to increase the Council in London, which was proposed by Lord Palmerston, from eight to eighteen Members, half of whom were to be elected and were, in all other respects, to be entirely independent of Government. He regretted that the unsettled state of the country did not admit of a representation of the people in India itself, and all that could be done in the meantime was to approach as near to that form of Government as the circumstances would permit. The



provisions of his Bill to effect that purpose were briefly these: Four of the elected half of the Council were to be members of the Indian Civil and Military Services of ten years' standing, and the remaining five must have been engaged in trading with India for at least five years. The constituency electing the four members connected with the services was to consist of all officers of both branches of the India service, and also of all residents in India owning £2,000 of an Indian railway or £1,000 of Government stock. The five mercantile members were to be elected by the Parliamentary constituencies of London, Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. So deeply ingrained is this notion of Government by representation in the minds of Englishmen, that, rather than leave it out of sight altogether in dealing with the affairs of India, the Government of that day made the proposals I have stated. Although the intention underlying these proposals was applauded, the scheme itself was felt to be, from the imperfect character of the constituencies, wholly inadequate to secure the check that was desired. It was clear—or rather it soon became clear—that the interests of one set of voters were adverse to the interests of the mass of the people, and that the other set knew absolutely nothing of the country or its wants. Received with favour at first, the Bill soon became the object of jest and derision on the part of the Opposition, and even its more impartial critics said of it that it was useless offering to the people of India, under the name of bread, what would certainly turn out to be a stone. At the suggestion of Lord John Russell, the Bill was withdrawn, and the House proceeded by way of resolution to construct the frame-work of another Bill.

The plan finally adopted was this: the Legislative and Administrative powers were to be entrusted to a Viceroy and a Council in India, and the check upon them was to be a Council of fifteen Members sitting in London. This Council was to be responsible to the Cabinet through a Secretary of State, who was to be responsible in turn to the House of Commons. This arrangement was regarded merely as a provisional one, and the policy to be pursued was to work up to the constitutional standard. Education was to be largely extended and improved, and the natives of the country were to be drafted into the service of Government as they became qualified, with the view, among other reasons, to fit them for the anticipated enlargement of their political powers. (*Hear, hear.*) The promises made and the prospects held out in the debates in Parliament derived a lustre from the famous proclamation of the Queen,—the half-fulfilled charter of India's right,—which was first read and published to the people of India in this very city of Allahabad thirty years ago. (*Loud cheers.*) Now, what I wish to impress upon your minds by this brief narrative is the great importance that was attached at that time to some sort of constitutional check. Failing to have it in the form that the English people themselves approved and followed in the management of their own affairs, they devised the substitute with its threefold check that I have mentioned. Parliament itself was full of gushing enthusiasm as to the part it would take in the business. In the absence of a representative body in India, the House of Commons was to play the rôle of one on our behalf. It was to regard the work as a great and solemn trust committed to it by an all-wise and

inscrutable Providence, the duties of which it would faithfully and fully discharge. Such was the style of language employed both in and out of Parliament at the time I allude to. And now what is the actual state of the case? It is summed up in a single sentence—There is no check. The Bill under which our affairs are administered appears, like many other Bills, to be open to more than one interpretation. The interpretation put upon it at the time, and what was probably the intention of Parliament, was this: the Government in India was to have the right of the initiative; the Council in London the right of review; and the Secretary of State, subject to the ultimate judgment of the House of Commons, the right of veto. And this was practically the relations of the parties until 1870. In that year the Duke of Argyll was Secretary of State; and in a controversy on this subject with Lord Mayo, who was then Viceroy, he laid down quite another doctrine. He held that the Government in India had no independent power at all, and that the prerogative of the Secretary of State was not limited to a veto of the measures passed in India. "The Government in India," he maintained, "were merely Executive Officers of the Home Government, who hold the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure, and of requiring also all the Official Members of the Council to vote for it." This power-absorbing Despatch is dated the 24th November, 1870. The supposed power and privileges of the Council in London have been similarly dealt with, and the Council is now regarded merely as an adjunct of the office of the Secretary of State to furnish him with information or advice when he chooses to ask for

it. The present position, then, is this: the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons has the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it.

The 650 odd members, who were to be the palladium of India's rights and liberties, have thrown "the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence" back upon the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best. (*Laughter.*) The affairs of India, especially in the Financial Department, have passed with no kind of check whatever into the hands of the Secretary of State. I do not blame the present members of the House of Commons for thus abdicating the functions that their predecessors of thirty years ago assumed. The truth is, that they have not time enough to attend to the details of the trust; and on more important matters they can have only one side of every question—the official side—presented to them; and they know from experience that that is not always the whole of the case. (*Laughter.*) As they are not in a position to judge rightly, they do not attempt to judge at all; and they may fairly come to the conclusion that, if it is not worth our while to demand and agitate for some voice in our own affairs, it is not worth their while to trouble themselves at all about us. If we be satisfied, for example, to have the Budget thrown at our heads like a snow-ball—and a muddy one it is—we deserve to have it in that way. There is a common belief among the European trading community that there are some big leaks in the Store department and in Home charges generally; but we have no means for verifying or disproving the suspicion. Now and again we hear of some facts that confirm it. Here is one told

me the other day by an authority I would call unimpeachable. The department with which this gentleman is connected indented for an article, and after many weary months it came at last, charged six times the price for which, my informant said, he himself could have bought it. If we be content with the secrecy and the supposed inefficiency of such a system, then I say we deserve no better. Temporary commissions of enquiry into the working of such departments are of little good. The real remedy is a permanent commission in the shape of elected members of Council having the right to look into such matters. (*Cheers.*)

But when we make the demand that the political institutions of the country should be placed on a wider basis, we are not only asking what the Government of thirty years ago avowed was desirable, but also what almost every Viceroy since that time has either promised or held out as a hope to be indulged in by us. I admit that these promises have been associated with such phrases as "when qualified" or "as far as may be." These words doubtless afford a pretext for shirking the due fulfilment of the promise. Of course, to the antagonistic mind, our qualification will always be in the future ; but I am sure I express your conviction when I say that, whatever use the abettors of the present bureaucratic rule may make of these phrases, the distinguished personages who uttered them had far other intentions than to make of them a loop-hole of escape when all other channels of retreat were closed by a reasonable fulfilment of the conditions. Putting aside, then, this Small Cause Court use of the words (*laughter*), I come to say something on the question of qualification. What does it mean? What

was in the minds of the Queen's advisers when these phrases were employed? Can we doubt that they were thinking of the qualifications of ordinary English constituencies at a somewhat more rudimentary stage of their development than they are to-day? Now, if it can be shown that there are considerable numbers of people in this country with attainments and characteristics similar to those of constituencies in Great Britain two or three generations back, the condition as regards them has surely been amply fulfilled. But how is that to be shown? It is not a matter for mere floating opinion to decide, one man saying "Yes," and the next saying "No," but neither being able to adduce any reason or state any fact in support of his view. If you want to know the financial resources of a body of men, such as a trading company, you audit their accounts. If you wish to ascertain where a village is in point of education, you don't inquire what Mr. This or Baboo That thinks, but you want to know how many schools there are, how many scholars there are, and what amount of money is being spent upon them. Then you have facts of a kind on which to form an intelligent and reliable judgment. Now, gentlemen, in the Blue Books published by the Indian Government you have the material, the moral, and the educational state of the country set out in such fulness as to enable us to say where the people are in the scale of humanity as compared with those of other countries. I am not going into an "as-dry-as-dust" analysis of these facts. I simply indicate the method of proof, and I challenge any one to rise from the study of these books, and give reasonable grounds for denying that there are large bodies of men in this country

fitted in every way for the proper discharge of duties connected with a constitutional form of Government. One or two of the facts may be mentioned, however, to illustrate the nature of this evidence. The total foreign trade of India has reached the figure of £150,000,000 a year, which was the extent of the commerce of the United Kingdom in 1837. We are in precisely the same position as regards commerce that England was in fifty years ago, and yet the mercantile community have not an authoritative word to say about the laws and regulations affecting such a prodigious trade. The income of the British Government in 1837 was £47,200,000, not one penny of which was raised or spent without the sanction of the representatives of the people. The Indian Budget of last year shows an income of £77,000,000, and there is not a man in the country outside the Supreme Council who has a vote or a voice in the matter. (*Loud cheers.*) Since 1858, about £20,000,000 have been spent on educational institutions. The number of these institutions at the present time is 122,000, attended by upwards of 3,300,000 students. The number of schools in England in 1821 was only 18,467, and the scholars 650,000. These, however, have rapidly increased during the last twenty years, but it was not till 1881 that they reached the number of the schools and scholars in this country. Now a statesman or a politician would surely be justified in concluding that the country, of which such facts can be stated, must have within it considerable numbers of men of means, intelligence, industry, foresight and moral grit—the very material out of which good representative institutions can be carved. But there are other considerations that add weight to the

testimony of the Blue Books. In all the discussions that have taken place in Parliament about the inhabitants of India, there is one section which has never been thought of at all—I mean the British non-official class to which I belong. I want to make our existence known. We may be known as barristers and solicitors, as bankers, traders, merchants, engineers, editors of newspapers, manufacturers, planters and so forth, but the idea of citizenship, and all that that implies, never seems to have occurred to our rulers in connection with us. I know it has been said that we are already represented. We are English and the Government is English: therefore we are represented. But that is a false inference and a pure delusion. We have no more power and no more voice in the Government of the country than you Indians have. The Government is no more ours because it is administered by a Secretary of State who is an Englishman, than the bread in a baker's shop is ours because the shop happens to be kept by an Englishman and not by a native. (*Laughter and cheers.*) We are all alike held to be on the same low level of unfitness and unripeness. The only thing we are the least bit of good for in the country, from the Governmental point of view, is to be taxed. (*Cheers.*) We are ripe enough for that—ripe enough to come under the sweep of the Board of Revenue sickle—but unripe for the meanest privileges of subjects of a free country. Our number is uncertain. The census tables do not inform us, but, few or many, almost all of us would be voters in England, and I venture to suggest that we would make a passable fraction of a constituency in this country. There is another consideration. There are many thousands of Hindu, Mahomedan,



Eurasian, Parsee and other gentlemen in the country, who, if they were to transfer their persons to England for twelve months or more and pay certain rates, would be qualified to enjoy all the rights and privileges of British subjects. If you and I go to England we are qualified. If we return to India our character changes, and we are not qualified. In England we should be trusted citizens. In India, well, the charitably-minded among our opponents say that we are incipient traitors! (*Loud and prolonged cheers and laughter.*)

There is one more consideration. You know that the Government is accustomed to send some of the Bills it has in preparation to all our leading Associations, both native and European, for the expression of our opinion upon their provisions. If we be qualified to give an opinion outside the Councils, how much more valuable would that opinion be with the fuller knowledge that can be obtained inside the Councils?

I have thus far spoken of the qualification as having an intellectual as well as a material basis, but I may say here that the only qualification ever known to the British constitution has been the possession of a stake, as it is called, in the country. For four hundred years that stake was a forty-shillings freehold. At the present time it is the occupancy of a house and the payment of certain rates. An educational qualification may be implied in these later days, but it has never formed a test of fitness within the British dominions. But assuming it to be so, then, what I find is that India to-day, taking it all over, is in rather a better state in this respect than England was a century ago. At least every ninth man in India can read and write. Now, I will read you a

short extract from an excellent little book by Professor Thorold Rogers, called the "British Citizen." He says, speaking of England: "I do not believe that 100 years ago more than one man in ten, or one woman in twenty, knew how to read and write. When I was a youth in a Hampshire village hardly one of the peasantry who was over forty years of age knew how to read. It was deemed superfluous to give even a rudimentary education to the peasant." Going another century or two back, the people of England, man and boy, high and low, with the exception of a mere handful, were steeped in the grossest ignorance, and yet there was a House of Commons. But whatever may be deemed to be a proper qualification in England or here, it is part of our own case that the great majority of the people is quite unfitted for the franchise. There we are at one with our opponents. But then they say that that is a good reason why the minority should wait until the mass be also qualified. There I think they are wrong. Granted that a man is not entitled to a vote any more than he is entitled to drive a steam engine, and that is my own view of this question; but because the persons in a country capable of managing steam engines are few compared with those who are not, are we, on that account, to debar the capable few from following their vocation? (*Oheers.*) In like manner I contend that if there be but a small minority in a country fitted to exercise the useful function of the franchise, it is a mistake to withhold the privilege from them on the ground that others are not fitted. Given increasing means and growing intelligence, and there invariably follows a desire to have a voice in all matters that concern

us; and I hope it is not difficult to believe that such a desire, "the monition of nature," as Carlyle calls it, "and much to be attended to," has been implanted in the human breast for some wise and good purpose. Happy would it be for the world if, instead of thwarting and repressing such a desire, its rulers nourished it and guided it, as it arose, into the proper channels for its due gratification and exercise. (*Loud cheers.*)

Now, the views and facts I have submitted would seem to warrant some important change in the polity of the country; but the change we do advocate is one of extreme moderation, and far within the limits that the circumstances of the country, in my own opinion, would justify. We don't seek to begin, as has been asserted, at the point England has reached after many generations of constitutional Government. We don't want the strong meat of full age, but we want to be weaned. We say there are numbers of us who have had the feeding bottle long enough. We desire no sudden snapping of existing ties; we ask only for the loosening of the bonds. We are content to regard ourselves as in the position of the man who has long been confined in a darkened room on account of disordered eyesight. We know that under the skilful treatment of a kindly physician our visual powers have been strengthened. We have sense enough not to demand the full blaze of day to be suddenly let in upon us, but only such a drawing-aside of the curtains as will adjust the light to our powers of vision. But, if the physician, skilful and kindly as we recognise him to be, were to insist upon our remaining in the dark, we should be forced to the unwelcome conclusion that his skill was resultless and

abortive, or that the unlovable side of his character had manifested itself, in that he wished to keep us in the dark for some unworthy purpose of his own. If under such treatment we became discontented with his services, the blame of it would be with the physician and not with the patient. (*Cheers.*)

Now, gentlemen, I will state more definitely the change we desire. We want the Legislative Councils to be expanded to an extent that will admit of the representation of the various interests in the country, as far as that may be practicable. We want half the Councils to be elected, the other half to be in the appointment of Government, and we are willing that the right of veto should be with the Executive. We also want the right of interpellation. These are the substance of our wants. We propose that the constituencies should consist of Members of Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Associations, associations like the British Indian Association, and, generally, all persons possessing such qualifications, educational and pecuniary, as may be deemed necessary. We should have to go far back in the history of England to find a parallel to the limited privileges we should be content with,—to the time, at all events, of Edward the First, 600 years ago, when Barons and Commons sat together, and when King and Barons held the sway. We are not wedded even to these proposals. The principle of election frankly accepted, there would be little difficulty in satisfying us in the matter of the constituencies, or as to the size of the Councils. The devising of a suitable elective body might well be left to the Government, or better still, by way of a preliminary, to the final judgment of the Government, to a small Commission which could

easily be rendered acceptable to the whole community. Happily there is no scarcity of men in the country, both among the official and non-official classes, abundantly qualified for such a work. I should like to mention the names of half-a-dozen such men chiefly for the purpose of dissipating the fears of those who seem to think we have some revolutionary scheme in view, and not because they only are competent for such an undertaking. If you were willing to commit the working out of the practical details of the reform we ask for to the men I wish to name, we ought to hear the last of the reckless charges that are made against us. The first I have in my mind's eye is that wary, sagacious Scotchman who has just closed a long and honourable career of worthy service among us, Sir Charles Aitchison. The second is an Englishman, no less qualified by experience and by endowment of head and heart for the task, Sir Steuart Bayley. The next is the veteran statesman from the Southern Provinces, Sir Madhava Rao. The next is a Mahomedan of tried legislative ability from the Bombay side of the peninsula, Mr. Budrudin Tyabji. The next is a gentleman from Bengal, whose character and talents have placed him in the front rank of his profession, W. C. Bonnerji. These five men presided over, and the balance held even between them, by such an one as the Governor of Bombay or Madras would, I believe, produce a scheme which would secure the approval of the Government, allay the fears of the timid, and satisfy the aspiring ones among us for a generation at least. (*Loud cheers.*)

I fear I have occupied your time to an unreasonable length, but I wish to trespass on your indulgence for a short time longer for the purpose of making a few

remarks on the speech of the ex-Viceroy at the Scotch Dinner in Calcutta. All movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown." The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. These various phases overlap each other, but between the first and last the distinction is complete.

Well, we are out and away from the comical aspect of the movement. It has become too serious for that, and we are midway between the abusive and misapprehensive stages. In the speech of our ex-Viceroy we have, as might be expected, none of the coarser instruments of attack—indeed, I find a vein of sympathy with us running through his speech—and we have partial concession, misapprehension regarding some of our demands, and, in consequence, the usual warning voice. The concession I refer to is as regards the separation of the Executive and Judicial functions. This was one of the ridiculous proposals, one of those school-boy clamours to start with, but the Viceroy now tells us that "this is a counsel of perfection to which we are ready to subscribe." Allow me to congratulate you upon this concession so frankly and handsomely made. All that we want now is to see the concession of the principle reduced into practice. (*Hear, hear.*) The misapprehension is contained in the following sentence: "The ideal authoritatively suggested, as I

understand, is the creation of a representative body or bodies, in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection to their will." Now, gentlemen, if there be one thing more than another that we have tried to make clear, it is that the British Executive should continue to be paramount in the Councils. We have made it as clear as the English language is capable of expressing thought, that the utmost we want is that half of the Councils be elected; the other half to be wholly in the nomination of the Government. These may be all officials or not, just as the Government pleases, and we have made it equally clear, in addition, that the Government should have the right to veto all adverse votes. Such an arrangement guarantees the supremacy of the Executive under all circumstances, aye, even if their own side vote against them. But, is it to be assumed that the elected members are all to vote adversely? Is it to be supposed that any measure of the Executive will be such as to be condemned by every section of the community? I hope no British Executive will ever take leaps into the dark to lead to such a result. Well, the Viceroy having started upon an assumption that it is not only incorrect, but is the very opposite of the fact, it follows that his condemnation does not apply to us at all, but to a fanciful piece of workmanship of which we are not the artists. The Viceroy must necessarily depend largely upon his subordinates for correct information about the details of this and other movements, and it looks to me as if one of those compilers of facts had fallen into some grievous error.

The authoritative views of the Congress are to be found in its resolutions, and the resolution about the reform of the Councils is the third one of the first meeting of the Congress three years ago, and that resolution has been the one affirmed at the following meetings. We are in no way bound even by any statement or argument that any speaker may make in supporting that resolution ; but I say with the greatest confidence that, neither in the resolution itself, nor in the speeches of the gentlemen supporting it, is a word to be found that justifies the “ideal authoritatively suggested.” There may be some remarks in letters to newspapers, in pamphlets, or in speeches made by members of the Congress that give support to the “ideal.” I don’t know of them, and if I did, I should regret them, just as I might regret any of our members having a hump back ; but I should feel no responsibility for either his back or speech. If we be charged with encouraging “ideals” on such grounds, we may as logically be charged, in the other event, as a Congress for promoting deformed spines ! (*Hear, hear and laughter.*) It is annoying to us, no doubt, that our friends, as I take Lord Dufferin to be, should be deceived by imitations of our ticket ; but as we have no Trade Mark Bill to protect our wares, all that we can do is to warn our friends to ask for the real article and to see that they get it. (*Loud and continued cheers.*)

And now, gentlemen, I wish to say, in conclusion, that I have a strong faith that our limited enfranchisement is in the near and not in the distant future. No rational mind can believe that the present system can go on for ever,—that it is the last will and dying testament of Providence regarding us.



(*Laughter.*) We are, I trust, the heirs of a better hope. A careful reading of the speeches and writings of our leading officials leads me to believe that they would be glad to see this matter settled; and I do not exclude Sir Auckland Colvin from this category. His objection seems to be to some of the bye-play and not to the general drift of the drama. The great difficulty hitherto has been to find the time to deal with the subject. Lord Dufferin had his thoughts too fully occupied with the troubles on the frontier and in Burmah to give adequate attention to this question, which is apparent in the mistake he has fallen into regarding our demands. And I, for one, regret that it has not fallen to his lot to add a new lustre to his name, and to establish a further claim upon our regard by promoting a measure such as we advocate, —a measure which any statesman might well be proud to be the instrument of carrying; for it is one which (while going a long way, if not the whole way, in calming the present agitation) would draw into closer connection the two extreme branches of the Aryan race, the common subjects of the Queen-Empress: a measure which would unite England and India, not by the hard and brittle bonds of arbitrary rule which may snap in a moment, but by the flexible and more enduring ligaments of common interests promoted, common duties discharged, by means of a common service chosen with some regard to the principles of representative Government. (*A prolonged storm of applause and cheering.*)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING SPEECH.

Now, gentlemen, I have to thank you all for the very handsome way in which you have received and carried the resolution which has been proposed by my friend on the left. (*Cheers.*) It is not always easy to express one's feelings on such occasions, and I sometimes think it is best not to attempt to do so, but simply to adopt the old but simple form of returning thanks, "Gentlemen, I thank you from the very bottom of my heart" (*loud cheers*), and this I do, now, in all sincerity and truth. I am very glad, indeed, to have rendered any service to the cause of the National Congress. (*Cheers.*) I believe the principles upon which it is founded are just, good and true; and that in due time its aims will be accomplished. (*Loud cheers.*) There are many grievances in the country under the present system of government, and these multiply and deepen, for the simple reason that there has been no channel through which they could be adequately represented to the authorities. (*Cheers.*) In this respect the Congress offers great advantages, and I have paid a good deal of time and attention to the question on which I addressed you in my opening speech, namely, the reform of the Legislative Councils, as being the best of all outlets for the grievances that are scattered over the whole country. (*Cheers.*) I do not only esteem it to be a proper thing to attach myself to such a Congress, but I also esteem it is an honour. (*Cheers.*) I am sure that, in course of a year or two, or perhaps even before that, the main principles on which the Congress is based will be recognized, not by you and me alone, but by the highest authorities in the land. (*Loud and prolonged cheers.*)



# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## FIFTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT BOMBAY ON THE 26TH DECEMBER, 1889.

V.

*"And in my humble judgment the movement is unmitigated good in its origin, its objects, and its methods. As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of the noblest efforts of British statesmanship: the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions freely granted to the people of India."*

I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart, for the great honour you have conferred upon me. I beg leave also to offer my acknowledgments to the mover, the seconder and the supporter of this resolution for the gracious terms in which they have referred to my past connection with India. After our long acquaintance it seems hardly necessary that I should assure you of my feelings of good-will towards the people of India. (*Cheers.*) But I will mention this one fact, that I have passed a quarter of a century among you, and during that period of time I have not known what it was to suffer an unkindness from a native of India. During that period I have been in the service of the people of India, and have eaten their

salt. (*Loud and continued cheering.*) And I hope to devote to their service what still remains to me of active life. I take this chair to-day with much pleasure and pride. It warms my heart to receive this mark of confidence from the Indian people. And I rejoice to take part in a movement so well calculated to promote the best interests of India and of England. (*Cheers.*)

I have watched from its commencement the movement which has now culminated in the National Indian Congress. And in my humble judgment the movement is unmitigated good in its origin, its objects, and its methods. As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of the noblest efforts of British statesmanship: the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions freely granted to the people of India. Again, what are the practical objects of the Congress movement? They are—to revive the national life, and to increase the material prosperity of the country; and what better objects could we have before us? Lastly, as regards our methods, they are open and constitutional, and based solely on India's reliance upon British justice and love of fair-play. Looking back to the history of the movement, there was one critical time in its development: that was about ten years ago. The leaven was then actually at work, though the purposes of the movement were not then so well defined, and it was unwisely sought to deal with it by a policy of repression. The results might have been disastrous. But happily that time of tribulation was cut short by the arrival of the greatest and best of all our Viceroys—the Marquis of Ripon. (*Loud cheers.*) By his wise and sympathetic policy Lord Ripon met and fulfilled

the aspirations of the national movement. And on their side the people of India recognised that a government conducted in such a spirit could not be regarded as an alien rule. This was the meaning of the passionate demonstrations, at the time of Lord Ripon's departure. You, gentlemen, will correct me if I am wrong in saying that those demonstrations were a popular declaration that on such terms British rule could be accepted as the national Government of the Indian people. (*Long and enthusiastic cheers.*)

But, gentlemen, you know all this as well as I do, and better. I think what you want to hear from me is not so much about your affairs in India as about your affairs in England. I have been nearly three years away from you, and have been studying English politics with special reference to Indian interests. And you would like to know what are the results. You will naturally ask me, what are the prospects of the Congress movement in England? What are the obstacles which we have to overcome? And what are the practical objects to which our activity can best be directed? To these inquiries I would reply generally that our hopes depend entirely upon the degree to which the British people can be induced to exert their power with reference to India. Our one great ultimate question is that of a Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. If that can be obtained, all will be well. The case of India in England is really a simple one. The Crown and Parliament of Great Britain have laid down certain broad and liberal principles for the administration of India, and have solemnly pledged themselves that these shall be acted on. With those principles the people of India are fully satisfied. But the difficulty is in the practice. For owing to the neces-

sity of the case the actual administration has to be entrusted to official agents in India. And the problem is, how under the circumstances can an effectual control be exercised from England so as to ensure these principles being carried out and these pledges fulfilled? Unfortunately there is one very serious fact which much enhances the difficulty of this problem, and it is this, that in certain important particulars the professional interests of our official administrators in India are in antagonism with the interests of the Indian taxpayer whose affairs they administer. This is a somewhat delicate matter, but it is an important one, and I feel it my duty to speak out clearly. Perhaps also it is easier for me than for most people to speak freely regarding the Indian official class, and that for two reasons. First, because I am deeply interested personally in the honour of that class. (*Hear, hear.*) The Indian Civil Service has been a sort of hereditary calling in our family since the beginning of the century. My father entered the Civil Service in 1807, and my eldest brother followed him, until he lost his life in the Bengal mutinies. I came out shortly afterwards, so that we are identified with what may be called the Indian official caste. The other reason is, because my complaint is against the system: not against the men who carry it out. On the contrary, it is my deliberate belief that the Indian Civil and Military services have never been surpassed for honest hard work and unselfish devotion to duty. (*Cheers.*) Such being the case, I have no hesitation in repeating that the interests of the Indian services are in great measure antagonistic to the interests of the Indian taxpayer. The main interests of the Indian taxpayer are peace, economy and reform. But all those are

necessarily distasteful to the civil and military classes. A spirited and well equipped army naturally desires, not peace, but active service. And who can reasonably expect officials to love economy, which means reduction of their own salaries; or reform, which means restriction of their authority? (*Cheers and laughter.*) It cannot be expected that as a class our official administrators in India will work for peace, economy and reform. But this very fact makes all the more urgent the necessity for a control in England which shall be both vigilant and effectual. We have therefore now to see what is the state of that control. Is it strong, vigilant and effectual? I am sorry to say that the answer to this question is highly unsatisfactory. A brief historical review will, I fear, show that, in the matter of Parliamentary control, things have gone from bad to worse, until they are now about as bad as can be. It is now more than a hundred years ago since Edmund Burke (*cheers*) pointed out the crying need for a strong impartial control in England over Indian affairs. And Mr. Fox's Indian Bill would have provided an organized machinery for exercising this control. But unhappily, owing to party struggles unconnected with India, this bill fell through, "India's Magna Charta," as Burke called it, and never since has a similar attempt been made. But although no remedy was then applied, things were not so bad until the passing of the Government of India Act in 1858, which transferred the Government from the Company to the Crown. It is from that Act that I date our principal misfortunes. Till then we had two important safeguards. The first was the wholesome jealousy felt by Parliament towards the East India Company as a privileged Corporation. The other was the necessity



for the renewal of the Company's charter at the end of every 30 years. At each of those renewals the Company's official administration had to justify its existence; there was a searching inquiry into grievances: and there never was a renewal without the grant to the public of important reforms and concessions suited to the progressive condition of Indian affairs. (*Cheers.*) Now, unfortunately, both those safe-guards are lost. The official administrators, who used to be viewed with jealousy, have now been admitted into the innermost sanctum of authority, and, as Council to the Secretary of State, form a secret Court of Appeal for the-hearing of all Indian complaints. They first decide all matters in India, and then retire to the Indian Council at Westminster to sit in appeal on their own decisions. Such a method of control is a mockery, a snare, and a delusion. This evil is very far-reaching, for, when a decision is passed at the India Office, the Secretary of State becomes committed to it, so that if an independent member tries to take up the case in the House of Commons, he finds himself confronted, not by a discredited company, but by the full power of the Treasury Bench. But the loss of the periodical inquiry once at least in 30 years is, perhaps, a still more serious disaster. There is now no day of reckoning. And Indian reformers find all their efforts exhausted in the vain attempt to obtain a Parliamentary inquiry, such as was before provided, without demand and without effort. At the present moment such an inquiry is much overdue. The last periodical inquiry was held in 1854, so that under the old system a Parliamentary inquiry would have been begun five years ago. But although such an inquiry has been constantly asked for, and has been promised,

it has never been granted. No doubt we shall manage to get it in the end, but it will be at the cost of much wasted energy.

I think, gentlemen, I have shown that the last state of control is worse than the first. On the one hand, we have been deprived of our periodical inquiry into grievances, while, on the other hand, all complaints are calmly referred for disposal to the very officials against whom the complaints are made. (*Hear, hear.*) I should like, by way of illustration, to give a couple of instances to show how this system works in practice. The first case I will take is that which was well known, at the time, as the Break of Gauge controversy. In that matter General Strachey, as Public Works Member of the Viceroy's Council, held his own against the whole united public opinion of India, European and native, official and unofficial, and the railway gauge was fixed in the way he wished it. Later on the question came in appeal to the Secretary of State. But by that time General Strachey had retired from his position in India, and had been appointed to the Indian Council (*laughter*), where he was the official adviser of the Secretary of State in matters relative to railways and public works. When, therefore, the public fancied they were appealing from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, they were really enjoying an appeal from General Strachey to himself. (*Laughter.*) This instance shows how the system of the Indian Council is even worse in fact than in theory. One might perhaps suppose that there being fifteen members of the Council, one's grievance might come before those not personally affected. But such is not the case. Each member is considered as an expert as regards his particular province or department, and is

allowed to ride his own hobby, provided he allows his colleagues also to ride their own hobbies in the way they choose. The other instance is taken from my own experience, and has reference to agricultural banks. We cherish the idea that if he had fair-play, the ryot might develop into a substantial yeoman, instead of being the starveling he is. With a fertile soil, a glorious sun, and abundance of highly skilled labour, there is no reason why India should not become a garden if the ryot were not crushed by his debts. The only thing that is required is capital in order to settle these old debts and make advances to the ryots on reasonable terms, so that they may be supplied with water for irrigation and manure. As you know, we prepared a practical scheme, founded on the German system of peasant banks, and got all the parties concerned to agree to it. The Bombay Government approved of the experiment, which was to be on a very limited scale; and the scheme was forwarded for sanction to the Secretary of State by Lord Ripon's Government, Sir Evelyn Baring as Finance Minister having agreed to advance five lakhs of rupees for the settlement of the old debts. In England the scheme was well received. Mr. John Bright took the chair at a meeting in Exeter Hall in furtherance of the project, and each of the leading London daily papers expressed approval. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce also memorialized the Secretary of State in its favour. Well, gentlemen, this scheme entered the portals of the India Office and never left it alive. ("Shame!") It was stabbed in the dark, no one knows by what hand or for what reason. Not long ago our friend, Mr. Samuel Smith, asked a question about it in the House of Commons; he inquired why

the experiment recommended by Lord Ripon's Government was not allowed; and he was informed by Sir John Gorst that the scheme was not considered "practicable." Not practicable indeed! I wonder whether Sir John Gorst is aware that in Germany alone there are 2,000 such agricultural banks in active working, and that throughout the continent of Europe it is admitted that, without such financial institutions, the peasant proprietor is absolutely unable to maintain himself without falling into the clutches of the village usurer. I think I may say with confidence that the India Office has not yet heard the last word on the subject of agricultural banks in India. (*Cheers.*)

I fear, therefore, that in reviewing the situation in England, we must admit that the organized forces are in the hands of our opponents. The India Office is strong against us, together with the influence of the services and of society. The London Press is not favourable to us. And those members of Parliament who have Indian experience rank themselves mostly on the official side. On the other hand, we need not lose hope, for the spirit of the age is on our side. The forces of the new democracy are in favour of national aspirations; and wherever meetings of working men are addressed they are found willing, nay, eager, that justice should be done to India. (*Cheers.*) My friend has referred to the constituency of North Ayrshire, which has been good enough, on the liberal side, to choose me as its candidate; and he hoped that my invitation to come out here would not in any way damage my chances. I am very glad to assure you that so far from damaging my chances it has very much raised me in their estimation. (*Loud cheers.*) As soon as my supporters in North Ayrshire learned

that I had been invited to preside at this Congress, they were highly gratified, and resolutions were passed expressing strong sympathy with the Indian people. Nor is it on the liberal side only that India has active sympathisers. She has many good friends among Conservatives, and to those, I think, we may reasonably appeal in the matter of Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. It is sometimes said that Conservatives walk in the foot-steps of good reformers; that is, they stand now in the position that good reformers stood in, perhaps, fifty years ago. If this is so, we may well ask their help to carry through the reforms that commended themselves to Burke and to Fox; and still more, to restore that thirty years periodical inquiry which was originally secured to us by the wisdom of our ancestors. (*Cheers.*)

And if the older organizations are against us, we have younger organizations which are making good and healthy growth. First and foremost, the Indian National Congress is becoming a household word in England; and it will become a power in the State if you continue patient, persistent, moderate. Then, again, you have done well and wisely to establish organization No 2, a Congress Agency in London. In the Indian National Congress the people of India, hitherto dumb, have found a voice. But the distance to England is great, and the agency is needed, like a telephone, to carry the voice of the people of India to the ear of the people of England. It seems to me that the agency, under your indefatigable Secretary, Mr. William Digby (*loud cheers*), is simply invaluable in bringing India in contact with her friends in England, and in briefing those friends when they take up Indian subjects, either in Parliament or before

the public. Also the agency, with the Committee which supervises its working, will, we hope, be the nucleus round which an Indian party will gradually gather itself. This will be our organization No. 3, the Indian Parliamentary party, consisting of men who, however different their views may be on other subjects, are willing to co-operate on the basis of a just and sympathetic policy towards India. The meeting three weeks ago, at the National Liberal Club, under the presidency of our valued friend Mr. George Yule, was the first movement towards the formation of such a party. Strong sympathy was then expressed with the objects of the Congress; and it is hoped that when Parliament meets arrangements will be made to secure joint action in matters affecting Indian interests. But, gentlemen, I have not come to the end of our list of activities on behalf of India. I rejoice to learn that a group of Indian speakers of weight and experience are about to proceed to England, in company with our General Secretary (*loud cheers*), for the purpose of initiating a systematic propaganda by addressing popular audiences at the great centres of population throughout Great Britain. You will know well how to address those great audiences, appealing fearlessly to the highest motives, and calling on the people of England to perform their trust and duty towards the unrepresented millions of India: appeals to unselfishness, to justice, and to humanity will ever find a sure response from the great heart of the British people. (*Cheers.*)

In conclusion, I would like to address a few words to those of our English friends who distrust the Congress movement. The promoters of the Congress profess strong attachment to British rule. And I

would ask, is there any reason to doubt this profession? (*"No, no."*) Have those men any interests antagonistic to our rule? (*"No, no."*) Remember that the originators of this movement are educated men, trained up by us in a love of freedom and free institutions. Is it likely that these men should wish to exchange the rule of England, the freest and the most enlightened country in the world, for that of Russia, which is one of the most barbarous and retrograde? (*Cheers.*) I remember being much struck with the remark of a native friend of mine with reference to Russian advances. He said to me, "If India is lost we are the chief losers; you can go to your ships and will be safe in your distant homes. We, on the other hand, should lose all: our country, our liberties, and our hopes for the regeneration of our race." Perhaps some of our doubting English friends will say, "We attach more importance to deeds than to words." I think we can point also to deeds. It is well known that in all schemes for the invasion of India the Russian Generals depend for success on a hoped-for rising of the native population. In 1885 they appear to have put this idea to the test by a pretended advance. Had this move been followed by any signs of sympathy, or even by an ominous silence of expectancy throughout India, Russia would have rejoiced, and we should have felt our position weakened. But India does not treat England's difficulty as her opportunity. On the contrary there went up on all sides a patriotic cry, led by the native press, calling on all to join with men and money, and make common cause against the common foe. (*Cheers.*) I think also the action of the Congress, calmly viewed, will be seen to point in the same direction. The man who points out the

rocks and shoals towards which the ship is moving is the friend of the captain, not the enemy. And that is the light in which the Government should regard the criticisms of the Congress. The moderate reforms proposed by the Congress will all tend to make the people of India more prosperous and more contented, and will thereby strengthen the foundations of British rule. (*Cheers.*) And here I would specially invite our English commercial friends to join with us in our efforts to increase the material prosperity of the country. At present, owing to the poverty of the people, the trade is nothing in comparison with what it ought to be. This is an argument which has been effectively pressed by our veteran leader, Dadabhai Naoroji. He has pointed out that our Australian Colonies take English goods at the rate of £17 or £18 per head per annum, whereas poor India can only take at the rate of eighteen pence a head. If, by releasing him from his bonds of debt, and placing him in a position to exercise his industry, we could make the ryot moderately prosperous, how great would be the benefit to English trade! If the Indian customer could take even £1 a head, the exports to India would exceed the exports to all the rest of the world put together. I would, therefore, say to our mercantile friends, help us to make the ryot prosperous, and your commercial business will soon increase by leaps and bounds.

Gentlemen, I have now concluded my preliminary remarks, and I thank you for the patience with which you have heard me, and have now to invite you to attack, with good appetite, the substantial bill of fare which will be placed before you. I will not in any way anticipate your proceedings, but I may, perhaps,



express a hope that you will give early and earnest attention to the Bill for the Reform of the Legislative Council. And in connection with this Bill I would take the opportunity to congratulate you on the presence here to-day of a very distinguished visitor—one whose name is a synonym for independence, for strength, and for success. I think poor India is very fortunate in securing such a champion as Mr. Charles Bradlaugh (*loud and continued cheers*), a very Charles Martel of these latter days whose sledge-hammer blows have often shaken to their foundations the citadels of prejudice, of ignorance, and of oppression.

To-day there only remains to appoint, as usual, a Subjects Committee, and I will ask you to do this before we separate.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer, but will only express my earnest hope that your labours may prosper, and that your deliberations may effectually promote "the safety, honour and welfare of Her Majesty and her dominions." (*Loud and long continued cheers, followed by a general rising and waving of handkerchiefs and a final "One cheer more!"*)

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# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. PHEROZSHAH MEHTA, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## SIXTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT CALCUTTA ON THE 26TH DECEMBER, 1890.

### VI.

*"All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual, political, are, if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly, declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves, and to the whole world, for countless generations. Our Congress asks but to serve as a modest handmaid to that movement, asks but to be allowed to show the pits and the falls, asks but to be allowed to join in the blessing which England will as surely earn as there is an 'Eternal that maketh for righteousness.'"*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I beg to tender to you my most sincere thanks for the honour you have done me in calling me to preside over your deliberations this year. I cannot imagine a greater honour for a native of this country than to be elected, by your free and spontaneous suffrages, President of an assembly which is now one of the recognized institutions of the country—an unconventional Convention of the Empire, which, we may say without undue ostentation, has already earned a place in history,—not less surely, let us trust, than the famous

St. Andrew's Dinners of this city,—as making an epoch in the march of events, moulding the lofty destinies of this magnificent land. In speaking of myself as a native of this country, I am not unaware that, incredible as it may seem, Parsis have been both called, and invited and allured to call themselves, foreigners. If twelve centuries, however, entitle Angles and Saxons, and Normans and Danes, to call themselves natives of England, if a lesser period entitles the Indian Mahomedans to call themselves natives of India, surely we are born children of the soil, in which our lot has been cast for a period of over thirteen centuries, and where, ever since the advent of the British power, we have lived and worked, with our Hindu and Mahomedan neighbours, for common aims, common aspirations, and common interests. To my mind, a Parsi is a better and a truer Parsi, as a Mahomedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mahomedan or Hindu; the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognizes the fraternity of all the native communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common Government. Is it possible to imagine that Dadabhai Naorojee, for instance, true Parsi that he is, is anything but an Indian, living and working all his life for all India, with the true and tender loyalty of a son? Can any one doubt, if I may be allowed to take another illustration, that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was greater and nobler when he was devoting the great energies and talents with which he is endowed,—if for the benefit of Mahomedans in

particular,—for the benefit of all Indians in general, than when, as of late, he was preaching a gospel of selfishness and isolation? The birthright, therefore, gentlemen, which the Parsis thus possess of so inde-feasible and glorious a character, they have refused and will always refuse to sell for any mess of pottage, however fragrant and tempting. (*Loud cheers.*) More especially, therefore, as an Indian it is that I return to you my grateful thanks for the honour you have done me.

I have ventured, gentlemen, to ascribe to the Congress the credit of making an epoch in Indian political progress. A very brief survey of the incidents of the twelve months that have elapsed since we last met will amply justify our title to that distinction. In the admirable address which was delivered by my predecessor in this chair at Allahabad, Mr. Yule pointed out that all movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking big jumps into the unknown. The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement, with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. Well, gentlemen, we have pretty well passed the first two stages. We have survived the ridicule, the abuse, and the misrepresentation. We have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. We have survived the charge of being a microscopic minority. We have also survived the charge of being guilty of the atrocious crime of being educated, and we have even

managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise. (*Laughter and cheers.*)

The question of our loyalty is set at rest for ever. In the debate on Lord Cross's India Reform Bill in the House of Lords, Viceroy after Viceroy bore emphatic testimony to the loyal and peaceful character of our aims and efforts. Within the last few days the voice of no less a personage than one of our former Secretaries of State has confirmed this testimony. Lord R. Churchill—it is to no less distinguished a public man that I refer—has publicly declared that “he could sincerely remark that no one will rejoice more than himself if the deliberations of the Indian National Congress, shortly to be resumed, were to contribute effectually to the progress and the welfare of the Indian people.” Then, gentlemen, it is made clear that we have not learnt the lessons of history so badly, as to demand the introduction of the full-blown representative institutions which, in England, have been the growth of centuries. It is made clear that we have not asked for even such a modicum as was enjoyed by the English people even before the time of Simon de Montfort, more than five centuries ago, nay, that we have not asked even for representative institutions of a governing or ruling character at all. Indeed, so far as this historical argument is concerned, we have not alone proved that we have *not* been guilty of disregarding it, but we have been successful in turning the tables upon our adversaries. We have shown that it is they who defy the lessons of history and experience when they talk of waiting to make a beginning, till the masses of the people are fully equipped with all the virtues and all the qualifications

which adorn the citizens of Utopia, in fact, till a millennium has set in, when we should hardly require such institutions at all. We have shown that people who indulge in such vain talk have never understood the laws of human progress, which, after all, is a series of experiments in which men and institutions re-act upon each other for their mutual improvement and perfection. We have also proved that, in spite of our education, and even with our racial and religious differences, the microscopic minority can far better and far more intuitively represent the needs and the aspirations of their own countrymen than the still more microscopic minority of the omniscient District Officers, whose colloquial knowledge of the Indian languages seldom rises above the knowledge of English possessed, for instance, by French waiters at Paris Hotels which proudly blazon forth the legend—"Ici on parle Anglais;" and whose knowledge of native domestic and social life and ways and habits of thought seldom extends beyond a familiarity with flattering expressions of the Saheb's greatness and paternal care, sometimes inspired by courtesy and sometimes by interest. An amusing story was related to me of a little incident that occurred only the other day, which is not without instruction as illustrating the amount of knowledge possessed by Anglo-Indians of the people among whom they have moved for years. The wife of a member of Parliament, who has come out on a visit to India this year—herself as distinguished as her husband for her kindly sympathy in Indian welfare—was sitting at dinner next to a learned member of my profession, who, in the course of conversation, grew humorous and sarcastic by turns in the fashion of Mr. Rudyard

Kipling, on the ridiculous and outrageous pretensions of globe-trotters to know the country and its people better than Anglo-Indians who had lived in it for years. He was rattling away, well satisfied with himself and the impression he thought he was producing on the lady, when, with the sweetest of smiles, she gently asked him how long he had been himself in India. Fifteen years—more or less—was the answer. I suppose you know well Mr. —, naming a gentleman whose recent elevation to the Bench of one of our High Courts was received everywhere with pleasure and approbation. Of course, I do, said his brother in the same profession. Can you tell me if he has only one wife or more than one? Slowly came the answer, No, I fear I can't. Well I can tell *you*; you see I have been only a few days in the country, said the lady quietly, and yet I think I know a thing or two which you don't. I trust my learned friend, who is the hero of this story, was properly grateful to the lady for giving him some serious food for reflection.

Then, gentlemen, our right to the designation of a National body has been vindicated. It is so admirably set forth in an article which appeared in a Conservative Review—*The National*—from the pen of a Conservative who, however, speaks from the fulness of intimate knowledge, that I cannot resist the temptation of borrowing from it. "The supposed rivalry," says the writer, "between Mussulmans and Hindus is a convenient decoy to distract attention and to defer the day of reform. I do not wish to affirm that there is no antagonism between the adherents of the two faiths; but I do most positively assert that the antagonism has been grossly exaggerated. Every municipal improvement and charitable work finds

members of the two faiths working together and subscribing funds to carry it out. Every political paper in the country finds supporters from believers in both creeds. Just the same is witnessed in the proceedings of the Congress. The members of the Congress meet together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country, subjects of one power, amenable to one code of laws, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. If these are not sufficient causes to weld a people together into one common alliance of nationality, it is difficult to conceive what would be sufficient. It is for this reason the organization has been called the Indian National Congress; not because, as many besides Mr. Keane have assumed, that it claims a non-existent unity of race, but because it deals with rights and interests which are national in character, and matters in which all the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula are equally concerned."

I think we may take it, gentlemen, that we have passed through the first two stages, and that the loyalty, the moderation, the propriety, and the constitutional and national character of our mission are now established beyond a doubt. But, however arduous and however provoking some of the experiences of the trial through which we have passed, they should not leave any trace of bitterness behind. For let us not imagine that they were devoid of chastening and beneficial effects upon ourselves. Let us frankly acknowledge that they also must have had their share in contributing to add clearness to our thoughts, sobriety to our methods, and modera-



tion to our proposals. If I might use a proscribed, but not unscriptural phrase, we must give even the devil his due. (*Laughter.*)

It is on the third stage—the era of achievement—that we have now entered. It is true that a majority of the Congress proposals do not still seem to have made much headway. Even as regards the proposal to separate the Executive and the Judicial functions, lauded by Lord Dufferin “as a counsel of perfection to which the Government were ready to subscribe,” Government are yet so absorbed in admiration of it that they have not recovered themselves sufficiently to take action. There is, however, no reason to despair. It was once proved upon sworn testimony in the Bombay High Court, before the late Chief Justice Sir M. Westropp, that a woman required 22 months for parturition in the air of the province of Kattyawar. It is not impossible, gentlemen, that the air of Simla may similarly necessitate a more than ordinarily long period of gestation to perfect even counsels of perfection; and therefore we must possess our souls in more than ordinary patience, lest any precipitate pressure might occasion a miscarriage. (*Laughter.*) In one little matter complete success has attended our efforts, viz., as regards the duty on silver-plate. The Abkari cause is also safe in the custody of that redoubtable champion, of whose formidable prowess you can form some idea, when you remember that it was he who so completely put to rout Mr. Goschen’s Compensation clauses. It is a matter of no small congratulation to us to welcome Mr. Caine as one of our own delegates. He first came out to this country with a free and open mind on the Congress question; with that fearless inde-

pendence which characterizes him, and which always, when I see him, recalls to my mind those famous lines of Burns—"The man of independent mind is king of men for a' that,"—he went for his education to Aligarh. Thanks to Mr. Th. Beck and Sir Syed Ahmed, he has come to us, not only a staunch Congressman in principles, but, as one of the Indian Political Agency, he has thrown his indomitable energy and his high-souled advocacy into active support of the movement. Mr. Caine can truly boast that, if he has not succeeded in extorting from Mr. Pritchard and all the most zealous Abkari officers the confession that they are Bacchus and his crew in disguise, they dare not, at least, throw off their masks while his watchful eye is upon them, but must continue to do penance in the assumed garb of uncomfortable and uncongenial principles. Leaving Christian to continue his combat with Apollyon, it is when we come to the central proposal of the Congress regarding the Legislative Councils, for the purpose of expanding and putting life in them, that we can congratulate ourselves on being on the verge of an important step. Many have been the circumstances, and many the forces and influences, that have contributed to this result. First and foremost among them is the circumstance that, without legal votes and legal qualifications, we have had the good fortune to become possessed of a member of our own in Parliament. Do not imagine, gentlemen, that Dadabhai Naoroji or Lal Mohan Ghose has at length been returned. But what member, even if we had the direct franchise, could have served us as Mr. Bradlaugh has done during the last twelve months? To say that the whole country is grateful to him for the untiring energy, the indefatigable care, the remarkable

ability with which he has watched and worked for its best interests in that House, where he has achieved so honourable a position for himself, can only most imperfectly express the depth and extent of the sentiments that are felt for him throughout the length and breadth of the land. His name has literally become a household word. He is raising up to himself a memorial in the hearts of the people of India, which will reflect more lustre on his name than titles and orders, and endure longer than monuments of brass or marble. (*Loud cheers.*)

We have been fortunate indeed in securing the sympathies of such a champion. No sooner did he return to England than he at once proceeded to redeem the promise he had made on that behalf, by introducing in the House of Commons his India Councils Reform Bill, drawn on the lines which were sketched and formulated at the last Congress, and with which you are all familiar under its justly deserved brief designation of the Madras Scheme. Two important results were the immediate outcome of this step. The scheme which was thus propounded was in its nature a tentative measure, so far as its details were concerned, and it at once drew forth useful and guiding criticism. In several respects its scope was misunderstood, especially as regards its supposed sweeping character, which might have been avoided, had we specified in the Congress skeleton sketch the restrictive limitations hedging the qualifications of the electorate. The criticisms of men like Sir W. Hunter and Sir R. Garth, for whose thoughtful, sympathetic, and friendly attitude towards Indian progress we are always so deeply grateful, exposed, however, one defect demanding serious consideration,

*viz.*, that the scheme was laid on new lines, and had a somewhat theoretical air, which Englishmen rather fight shy of in practical politics. In justice to the scheme, however, it should be said that Sir Richard Garth put his finger on a possible, rather than a probable, result when he thought that it would enable the Hindus to submerge the other Indian communities. Experience has shown that even in a preponderating Hindu electorate it does not happen that Hindus only are elected, as so many other, besides racial, forces and interests concur in influencing the selection. If we may apply the lessons learnt from experience in municipal elections, I may mention the remarkable fact that in the Town Council, or, what is now called the Standing Committee of the Bombay Corporation, composed of 12 members, there have been frequently 5 Parsis, 3 Europeans, 2 Hindus, and 2 Mahomedans. Sir R. Garth's criticism on this point, however, throws out a warning which should not be hastily disregarded.

But the next result, which the introduction of Mr. Bradlaugh's bill achieved, was gratifying in the highest degree. It at once dispelled the fit of profound cogitation in which men at the head of Indian affairs are so apt to be lost, that they can never spontaneously recover from it. Lord Cross's Indian Councils Bill promptly saw the light of day in the House of Lords. It was at once the official recognition of the *raison-d'être* of the Congress and the first fruits of its labours. In itself, however, it was a most halting and unsatisfactory measure. In framing it, the Prime Minister and the Indian Secretary of State seem to have been pervaded with a conception of the Indian people as a sort of Oliver Twist,

always asking for more, to whom it would be, therefore, a piece of prudent policy to begin with offering as little as possible. The Government Bill may be aptly described as a most superb steam-engine in which the necessary material to generate steam was carefully excluded, substituting in its place coloured shams to look like it. The rights of interpellation and of the discussion of the Budget were granted, but the living forces of the elective principle, which alone could properly work them, were not breathed into the organization of the enlarged Councils. The omission of the elective principle from the Bill was boldly justified by Lord Salisbury on the ground that "the principle of election or government by representation was not an Eastern idea, and that it did not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds." I wish to speak of his Lordship with all the respect to which his high talents and great intellectual attainments justly entitle him ; but it is not a little surprising as well as disappointing to find the Prime Minister of England, a statesman who, as Lord Cranborne, was once Secretary of State for India, displaying such profound ignorance of the history of the Indian people and the genius of the Indian mind. The late Mr. Chisholm Anstey, a man of immense erudition, once pointed out at a meeting of the East India Association in London, that "we are apt to forget in this country, when we talk of preparing people in the East by education, and all that sort of thing, for Municipal Government and Parliamentary Government, that the East is the parent of Municipalities. Local Self-Government in the widest acceptation of the term is as old as the East itself. No matter what may be the religion of the people who inhabit what we call

the East, there is not a portion of the country from west to east, from north to south, which is not swarming with municipalities; and not only so, but like to our municipalities of old, they are all bound together as in a species of network so that you have ready made to your hand the framework of a great system of representation." Sir H. Maine has shown that the Teutonic Mark was hardly so well organized or so essentially representative as an Indian village community until the precise technical Roman form was engrafted upon it. (*Cheers.*)

But leaving village communities alone, what do we find at the present day over the whole country, but all sorts and conditions of people, from the highest to the lowest, meeting together and transacting the business of their numberless castes, in assemblies which, in their constitution and their mode of working, are the exact prototypes of the Saxon Witans, from which the English parliamentary institutions have sprung. It is true that circumstances never allowed the representative genius of the people to develop forms and organizations for higher political functions. But it is no less true that the seed and the soil are there, waiting only for the skilful hand, and the watchful mind, which we of the Congress firmly believe we have secured in the presence of Englishmen in this country. The disdainful attitude of Lord Salisbury as to our aptitude for representative institutions need, however, bring no despair to our minds. His late Chief, Lord Beaconsfield, once said of him on a memorable occasion that he was a man who never measured his phrases or his sweeping assertions. On the contrary, I draw an augury of good hope from his pronouncement and that made

by his son, Lord Hugh Cecil, that "the Indian was not only a good Government, but it was probably the best conceivable Government that the population could possibly live under." On the eve of the passing of the great English Reform Bill, the Duke of Wellington, then the Tory Prime Minister, proclaimed in the same House of Lords that the existing constitution of the House of Commons was perfect, and that the wit of man could not *a priori* have devised anything so perfect. The declaration was received by the Liberals as a sure portent of victory, and the Reform Bill was passed within little more than a year after. I trust that the Salisbury pronouncement may prove prophetic in the same way. (*Cheers.*)

It is needless to discuss Lord Cross's perfunctory measure any further; even with the amendment which Lord Northbrook succeeded in getting accepted, it left the House of Lords in the same lifeless condition in which it entered. As soon as it reached the House of Commons, Mr. Bradlaugh fastened on it at once. It was true that he had got there his own bill, but Mr. Bradlaugh is a master of parliamentary tactics, inferior, if to any, only to Mr. Gladstone. He at once perceived that the supreme struggle was to be no more between one scheme and another, between territorial electorates or local Boards, but that every nerve would have to be strained and every resource husbanded to obtain, in the first place, recognition of the elective principle. That secured, everything else would follow in its own good time. With a masterly comprehension of the situation, he placed before the House amendments to the Bill directed to substitute the process of election for that of nomination. The Bill and the amendments have, however,

all gone the way of the majority, and the session closed without the opportunity of discussing them. Profiting, however, by the lessons in which the experience of the last twelve months was prolific, both without and within the walls of Parliament, Mr. Bradlaugh has hit upon the notable expedient of ploughing with Lord Cross's heifer. He has already introduced a new Bill, based on the same lines as Lord Cross's Bill, but vivifying it by the affirmation of the principle for which we are fighting. That Bill will be laid before you for your consideration. It will be for you to deal with it in your wisdom. However you may decide, of one thing I am certain, that you will maintain the character for moderation, sagacity, and practical good sense which you have so arduously acquired by your self-sacrificing and noble labours during the five years of the existence of the Congress. It is not for me to anticipate your verdict. But I am sure you will allow me, out of my anxious solicitude for the triumph of the cause we have all so earnestly at heart, to state the reasons which to my mind make so imperatively for the acceptance of the new draft, in which I cannot but recognize the statesmanlike craft and thorough knowledge of the shifting phases of English politics which Mr. Bradlaugh so eminently possesses, and which, as we all earnestly pray, promises to place him at no distant date in the front ranks of politicians in office, as he already is in the front ranks of those not in office. The old draft, admirably devised in some respects,—with many virtues and a few faults,—has not proved congenial to the English political mind, averse to new departures, and looking askance at theoretical airs of perfection. The new Bill has, on the other hand, all

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the elements of success in its favour. Its most striking merit is that it gathers round it the cautious, the carefully weighed, and responsible opinions of some of the best Viceroys we have ever had. Lord Northbrook has pronounced in favour of a properly safeguarded application of some mode of election. The righteous sympathies of the Marquis of Ripon are as warmly with us as ever, and his great authority weighs on the same side. Still more valuable, as coming from a Viceroy who left only the other day, is the measured and calculated approval which Lord Dufferin has recorded in a despatch, in referring to which I hope I am not making myself liable to the terrors of the Official Secret's Act. In mentioning Lord Dufferin, I will frankly say that we have not sufficiently recognised the great debt of gratitude which we owe to him in this respect, partly, I believe, through ignorance, and partly through misappreciation of the course he adopted, to neutralize opposition against the measures he recommended. An unrivalled diplomatist, his wary statesmanship was apt to assume the hues of the craft of which he is so accomplished a master. He sought an occasion when he could launch his proposals without provoking disagreement, endeavouring rather to conciliate it. The epoch-making St. Andrew's Dinner of 1888 offered him the needful opportunity. He knew Scotchmen, and their matter-of-fact character, so inimitably delineated by Charles Lamb. He knew, as that charming essayist tells us, that "surmises, guesses, misgivings, half intuitions, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions had no place in their brain or vocabulary." He drew before his hosts a vivid and alarming picture of imaginary Congress proposals—of "an ideal authori-

tatively suggested of the creation of a representative body or bodies, in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British executive into subjection to their will." But while his excited and valiant hosts rushed off, crying Scotchmen to the rescue, to tilt at windmills, he quietly threw in a sympathetic recognition of our just and legitimate aspirations, and proceeded to record a minute in which he substantially backed up the veritable Congress proposals. In this Despatch Lord Dufferin has briefly described his scheme as a plan for the enlargement of the Provincial Councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction into them of the elective principle, and the liberalization of their general character as political institutions. At this year's St. Andrew's dinner, Sir Charles Elliott eulogized Lord Dufferin's speech as epoch-making and fixing the bounds and limits of our demands—"so far and no further." We are quite content to go as far; we have never asked to go very much further. We may, therefore, fairly infer from Sir Charles Elliott's speech that he is in accord and sympathy with the main underlying principles of Lord Dufferin's scheme, and we can, therefore, congratulate the people of Bengal on their good fortune in possessing a ruler whom we can justly claim to be a true Congresswalla at heart. (*Laughter and cries of "Oh! Oh!"*)

I will not speculate without official sanction on the views of the present Viceroy. But I may permit myself to remind you that it was to Henry Marquis of Lansdowne that Macaulay dedicated those speeches,

in one of which, dipping far into the future, he spoke about the future Government of India in that noble passage with which we are all familiar : " The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a state which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws which regulate its growth and decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own." The dawn of that day which Macaulay foresaw, in dim, but prophetic, vision, is now breaking on the horizon ; the curtain is rising on the drama which unfolds the vista to that title to glory. Let us earnestly hope that the present illustrious bearer of the great historic name of Lansdowne, who, by a wonderful ordering of events, has now come to rule over us, may watch the glowing streaks of light with generous sympathy, and may preside over the march of events with timely and provident statesmanship. (*Loud cheers.*)

This weighty concensus of the best viceregal

opinion which I have placed before you, in favour of the principle of the new draft, we may expect to be backed up by the potent voice of that Grand Old Man whom we reverence, not only as the greatest parliamentary leader of modern times, but as the individual embodiment of the highest conception of moral and political duty which English statesmanship has reached in the nineteenth century. You are aware that Mr. Bradlaugh has recently declared that he was authorized to say that the course pursued by him in reference to the Government Bill, in endeavouring to obtain a recognition of the elective principle, was approved by Mr. Gladstone, who intended to have supported him by speech. It would require considerations of overpowering force, indeed, to persuade us to any course by which we might run the risk of losing such an almost certain pledge of ultimate victory. (*Cheers.*)

Another potent factor has come into existence within this year, which is calculated to help us materially—if we confine our efforts to the simple issue of election *versus* nomination—in the force of English public opinion, which, without undertaking to pronounce on questions of detail, has now declared itself to a very considerable extent emphatically in favour of the vital principle of election. The credit of informing the English mind and stirring the English conscience on this momentous question belongs to that small band of noble workers who were appointed at the last Congress to plead the cause of India before the great English people in their own country, and who cheerfully crossed the seas in obedience to such a call of duty, without counting the inevitable cost and sacrifice. The task which they undertook was a formidable one; they have discharged it in a manner

of which it is difficult to speak too highly. Of the leader of that band I cannot trust myself to speak with sober moderation, when I remember that it is to his genius we owe that flash of light which pointed out the creation of a body like the Congress, as fraught with the promotion of the best interests of English rule in India. I know there are numerous claimants for the credit of the idea, but if I may be pardoned for employing the rudely forcible language of Carlyle, "the firepan, the kindling, the bitumen were his own, but the lumber of rags, old wood, and nameless combustible rubbish (for all is fuel to him) was gathered from hucksters and of every description under Heaven. Whereby, indeed, hucksters enough have been heard to exclaim: "Out upon it, the fire is *mine*." He brought to bear upon his new enterprise the same zeal and fervour, combined with thoughtful judgment, that he has unsparingly bestowed for so many years upon the cause to which he has devoted his life. His presence on the Congress deputation entailed a further sacrifice and affliction, for which we can offer no consolation or reparation, except our deepest and most respectful sympathy. In his great and noble mission, Mr. Hume (*loud cheers*) had the entire co-operation of a man of no ordinary powers and capacity. The rare and unrivalled powers of oratory which we have learned to admire in Mr. Surendranath Bannerji (*cheers*)—for it is of him I speak—never shone with more brilliant effect than when he was pleading the cause of his countrymen at the bar of the English people, with a fire and energy that extorted universal respect and admiration. They had a powerful co-adjutor in my friend Mr. Eardley Norton, who has known so well how to make *splendid*

use of the heritage of great thoughts and noble deeds which he received from his distinguished father. Mr. Mudholkar, from the Central Provinces, did yeoman's service in the same cause, and his sober and thoughtful eloquence did not carry less weight than that of his brilliant colleagues. There is no need for me to say anything of the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and our other friends in England. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without grateful acknowledgment of the unceasing toil, the prodigious energy, and the organizing capacity contributed by Mr. William Digby. The delegates assembled here might render no inconsiderable service to our cause if they exerted themselves to stimulate by thousands and tens of thousands the circulation of the Congress paper entitled "India," started under the auspices of our British committee and conducted with such marked ability by him, and which has done, and promises to do, more and more, such incalculable benefit to the object we have at heart. The result of the English campaign clearly shows the wisdom of the new plan of operations suggested by Mr. Bradlaugh. It seems to me that success is well within our reach, if we resolutely apply ourselves to obtain, in the first instance at least, the recognition and application of the principle of election in the organization of our Legislative Councils. Let us then strive for it with the sagacity of practical men, who have not learnt in vain the lessons taught by English political history, and who know the value of moderate, gradual, and substantial gain.

To the many reasons which have been set forth in Congress after Congress, proving the imperative need of reformed Councils, another has been now

added. The discussion of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons was always more or less of a sham ; but it was a sham for which the officials of the India Office thought it at least a matter of decency to shed a tear of remorse. But now Sir John Gorst has boldly and candidly declared in his place in the House that there need be no sham regret at all ; that if anything, it was rather to be hoped and wished for that the House of Commons should not waste its time over the weary farce. (*Shame, shame.*) It is now officially declared that it is right and proper that Parliament should—to use Mr. Yule's happy way of putting it—throw “the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence” back into the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best, with such grace as Providence may choose to pour on the heads of Sir John Gorst, his heirs, successors, and assigns. I think you will agree with me that, when the responsible advisers of the Crown on Indian matters propound doctrines of such a character, it is high time that we should raise our united voice to demand Local Councils possessing some guarantees for energy and efficiency. (*Cheers.*)

It has been said that our united voice is the voice only of a certain portion of the people and not of the masses ; and that it is even then the voice of indifference, and not of urgency and excitement. These remarks are intended to be cast as matters of reproach against the Congress ; properly understood they constitute its chief glory. If the masses were capable of giving articulate expression to definite political demands, then the time would have arrived, not for consultative Councils, but for representative institutions. It is because they are still unable to do

so that the function and the duty devolve upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel, to understand, and to interpret their grievances and requirements, and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met. History teaches us that such has been the law of widening progress in all ages and all countries, notably in England itself. That function and that duty, which thus devolve upon us, is best discharged, not in times of alarm and uneasiness, of anger and excitement, but when the heart is loyal and clear and reason unclouded. It is, I repeat, the glory of the Congress that the educated and enlightened people of the country seek to repay the debt of gratitude, which they owe for their priceless boon of education, by pleading, and pleading temperately, for timely and provident statesmanship.. (*Cheers.*)

I have no fears but that English statesmanship will ultimately respond to the call. I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilizing principles of English culture and English civilization. It may be that, at times, the prospect may look dark and gloomy. Anglo-Indian opposition may look fierce and uncompromising. But my faith is large, even in Anglo-Indians. As in the whole universe, so in individuals, in communities, there is a perpetual conflict going on between the higher and lower passions and impulses of our nature. Perhaps some of you have read a little novel, called *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the plot of which hinges on the conflict between the two sides of a man's nature, the higher and the lower, embodied each, for the time being, in a separate and distinct individuality. If the lower tendencies are sometimes paramount in the Hydes of Anglo-Indian



society, if as our last President, Sir W. Wedderburn, said, the interests of the services are antagonistic to and prevail over the interests of the Indian people, it is still the oscillation of the struggle; it is still only one side of the shield. They cannot permanently divest themselves of the higher and nobler nature, which, in the end, must prevail, and which has prevailed in so many honourable, distinguished and illustrious instances. They are after all a part and parcel of the great English nation, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and they must even work along the main lines of that noble policy which Great Britain has deliberately adopted for the government of this country. When, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, India was assigned to the care of England, one can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old: "Behold, I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God: a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go after other gods whom ye have not known." All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual, political, are, if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly, declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves, and to the whole world, for countless generations. Our Congress asks but to serve as a modest handmaid to that movement, asks but to be allowed to show the pits and the falls, asks but to be allowed to join in the blessing which England will as surely earn as there is an "Eternal that maketh for righteousness." (*Cheers.*)

I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go

in vain. It may be that we sometimes speak in uncouth and outlandish ways, it may be that we sometimes stray in some confusion of thought and language; still it is the prayer of a rising, growing and hopeful nation. I will appeal to them to listen to the sage counsels of one of the most careful and observant of their modern politicians, who, like the prophet Balaam, called, I will not say, exactly to curse us, has, however, blessed us utterly. In his 'Problems of Greater Britain,' Sir Charles Dilke thus sums up his views on the Congress: "Argument upon the matter is to be desired, but not invective, and there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country, that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Great Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way. (*Cheers.*) The official class themselves admit that many of the natives who attack the Congress do so to ingratiate themselves with their British rulers and to push their claims for decorations. (*Hear, hear.*) Our first duty in India is that of defending the country against anarchy and invasion, but our other greatest duty is to learn how to live with what is commonly called the Congress movement, namely, with the development of that new India which we have ourselves created. Our past work in India has been a splendid task, splendidly performed, but there is a still nobler one before us, and one larger even than that labour on the Irish problem to which our public men on both sides seem too much inclined to give their whole attention." So careful an estimate of the work and spirit of the

Congress movement cannot but commend itself to all thoughtful minds.

However that may be, our duty lies clear before us to go on with our work firmly and fearlessly, but with moderation, and above all with humility. If we might be permitted to adopt those noble words of Cardinal Newman, we may say—

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on !

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead thou me on !

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see

The distant path, one step's enough for me. (*Long and enthusiastic cheering.*)

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# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

RAI BAHADUR P. ANANDA CHARLU, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## SEVENTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT NAGPUR ON THE 28TH DECEMBER, 1891.

### VII.

*"Let us impart to our people, as we are in righteousness bound to do, our conviction that they should cease to look upon the British rule as the rule of a foreign people. We should ask them to look upon our British rulers as filling a gap that has existed in our national economy—as taking the place once held by the Kshatriya, and as being, therefore, part and parcel of the traditional administrative mechanism of the land."*

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,—I thank you most warmly for making me take the Presidential Chair on this occasion. That chair has narrowly missed a far higher honour than I can do to it, owing to two unforeseen occurrences. One of these occurrences is that the Hon. Pundit Ajoodhia Nath is unfortunately, for both you and me, not a Madrassee. Were it not that he generously abdicated the dignity in favour of Madras, I should gladly have avoided the danger of accepting a situation that would draw me into comparison with that unselfish, whole-hearted, intrepid, and outspoken apostle of this great national movement. (*Cheers.*) But in this world of imper-

fections and of complex considerations, duty does not always fall on the fittest shoulders, and there is the additional reason that the unanimous mandate of the country compels my obedience.

The second occurrence I allude to, as the cause of my standing here to-day is, that my friend Dewan Bahadur Subramaniya Iyer\* has been raised to a seat on the High Court Bench of Madras. At the first blush this may seem a matter for regret; but, from the point of view from which I regard it, it affords reason for congratulation, rather than for regret, and that even *so far as the Congress is concerned*; for does it not give us another and eloquent proof that where other merits exist, active service in the cause of the public does, by no means, clash with the equally honourable ambition of obtaining high office as a public servant. Mr. Subramaniya Iyer's is the rare case of one who had not deliberately stood aloof from all public movements, with the possible prospect of entering Government service, and who, not lured away from the call of public duty by the first instalment of Government patronage, returned to that duty as cheerfully and as actively as before, and who has been nevertheless again selected to fill a high place in the official hierarchy of this country. With a scrupulous regard for the demands of both vocations, he took particular care that neither suffered by reason of the other, or on account of the other. Therefore, I assure you that, without meaning that I hope adequately to fill his place as the President of this great

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\* This gentleman had been originally proposed by several committees for the Presidentship. His elevation to the Bench of the High Court rendered it impossible for him to take part in any political movement,

National Assembly, it should be a matter of rejoicing to Congress that another of its prominent workers should have been elevated to the most dignified office, as yet open to indigenous talent, under the British administration of this country.

These personal considerations remind me of the loss—the irreparable loss—which the Congress has sustained, since its last sitting, by the lamented death of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. *He* was the redoubtable champion who brought within the domain of practical politics one of the foremost subjects in the Congress programme. Till Mr. Bradlaugh, who may, without exaggeration, be described as an embodiment of universal benevolence, befriended our cause with his characteristic unselfishness, all our pathetic appeals for a forward step, in the direction of reforming our Legislative Councils, remained a veritable cry in the wilderness; and the fact that, upon his death, even Lord Cross's halting measure was dropped, puts this beyond all doubt.

It is a matter for deep sorrow that Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's useful career was cut short before he could redeem even his guarded promise to us, that he hoped to carve and shape a step or two in the up-hill work that lay in front of us—a work of such magnitude and importance as to make him weigh most scrupulously the words he used. There is little prospect of any *one* man proving to us the tower of strength that he unquestionably was during the short time that we had the benefit of his lively sympathy and unremitting effort. We have indeed been slow to erect a memorial suited to his great merits and his unpurchased services in our cause; and our unfriendly critics have *not* been slow to make capital out of this

seeming apathy. In the Presidency from which I come famine and its attendant evils are, within my personal knowledge, chiefly answerable for this seeming remissness in the fulfilment of our duty—a duty which, as we view it, consists in a recognition of the work of that unflinching advocate of the people's rights, not merely by the monied few, but also by that far larger class to which he belonged, and of which he was proud to declare that he reckoned himself as one. Our monsoons, gentlemen, have begun to give signs of improvement, though after a very long delay. May this improved state of things bring in thousands of small contributions, which, tiny like the raindrops individually, may in the aggregate fill to overflowing the coffers of the many Bradlaugh Committees in the land. I have little doubt that this earnest appeal will meet with a ready, wide and adequate response before many months are over.

I shall next invite you, brethren, to join me in paying a similar loving, though mournful, tribute to the memories of two distinguished men who had figured as the Chairmen of Congress Reception Committees, and of whom death has robbed us since our last session—Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, K.C.S.I., and Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra, the latter of whom is, I think, better described and wider known under that title, which is a tribute to his profound scholarship and varied learning, than by the distinctions of Rai Bahadur and of Rajah—distinctions which came to him too late to add any lustre to his already brilliant fame. Our sincere gratitude is due to them for the eloquent exposition of the views of the Congress Party which their speeches as Chairmen embodied, and for the prominent part they took in the sittings of the Congress which they so heartily ushered in.

One more sincere friend of India, happily living and breathing in our midst and meriting our warmest acknowledgment, remains yet to be named—our General Secretary, Mr. A. O. Hume. (*Cheers.*) Through good report and through evil report, and at the sacrifice of health, money, well-earned ease, and peace of mind, he has steadily and earnestly adhered to his labour of love in the progressive interests of the people of this country, and he has thus earned, not only *our* love and gratitude, but, I hope also, the love and gratitude of our children and children's children. (*Loudcheers.*)

He has recently given us warning that he contemplates an early retirement from his Indian field of labour—a retirement which involves the resignation of his office as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. This, we must confess, has come upon us as a surprise, though we had no business to be unprepared for it. This unpreparedness is, in the main, traceable to the habits generated in us by the monopolizing character of British Indian rule, which, taking upon itself all the solitudes and almost all the responsibilities of the administration of the country, has given but little occasion for the development in us of the capacities and aptitudes necessary for facing with confidence a sudden emergency. If this were the second or third Session of the Congress, I should despond and shudder at the inevitable consequences. But thanks to his indefatigable exertions and his prophetic sagacity, he has coupled his warning with the inspiring assurance that one great work of the Congress has been accomplished; that its programme has been built up and promulgated; that the present seventh session is needed, not so much to



discuss new subjects, as to put the seal on all that its predecessors had done; and that it completes one distinct stage of our progress.

These are, without doubt, noble and encouraging words, and every syllable of them deserves our earnest attention. Let us look back on our career. What was our task at starting? In the words of our General Secretary, "a great work had to be done—we had to clear our own ideas and then make them clear to our opponents—to thresh out by persistent discussion the wheat of our aspirations from the great body of chaff that must, in the very nature of things, have accompanied it. We had to find out exactly what those reforms were, which the country, as a whole, most desired; we had to evolve and formulate a clear and succinct programme—to erect a standard around which, now and for all time, until that programme is realized, all reformers and well-wishers of India could gather; and we had to place that programme on record in such a form that neither foreign autocrats nor domestic traitors could efface its pregnant lines," or read into those lines a meaning that they were not intended to convey.

Now, let us note how we were a mere handful, numbering less than four score when we started on our national mission; how at that moment it was little more than an untried, though cherished, idea that we should strive to mitigate, if not to eradicate, race prejudices, to disarm creed antipathies, and to remove provincial jealousies; and how, by that achievement as a means towards an end, we wished to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity. Let us next note that, when under the impulse then given to our renovated national instincts, we met

next year in Calcutta, that ripe scholar and sober antiquarian, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra, declared that he saw in the assembly before him the commencement of the realization of the dream of his life, *viz.*, to witness the scattered units of his race come together, coalesce, and stand welded into one nation. Then came our session in Madras, and there we succeeded in blotting out the stigma that one part of our country was "benighted," and we exhibited the spectacle of a gathering, more considerable in numbers, more representative in composition, more adequate in the proportion of the Mahomedan contingent, more cordial in feeling, more in unison with the name of *this* institution, wider in basis, and altogether a nearer approximation than had till then been attained to the conception of a nationality in that sense in which alone that word has a meaning in political parlance. On the impregnable basis which that gathering illustrated, the subsequent sessions of the Congress were constituted, and our success has been great and signal.

To detract from the worth and significance of the well-knit, ever-expanding phalanx known as the Indian National Congress, a desultory controversy was raised round the word *nationality*—a controversy at once learned and unlearned, ingenious and stupid, etymological and ethnological. Now a common religion was put forward as the differentia; now a common language; now a proved or provable common extraction; and now the presence of the privileges of commensality and inter-conjugal kinship. These ill-considered and ill-intentioned hypotheses have, one and all, fallen to the ground, and no wonder: for the evident circumstance was lost sight of, that words might

have divers acceptations—each most appropriate for one purpose, and, in a like degree, inappropriate for other purposes. In my view the word “nationality” should be taken to have the same meaning as the Sanskrit *Prajah*, which is the correlative of the term *Rajah*—the ruling power. Though, like the term *Prajah*, it may have various significations, it has but one obvious, unmistakable meaning in political language, viz., the aggregate of those that are (to adapt and adopt the words of a writer in the *National Review*)—“citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one Supreme Legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced, for weal or woe, by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens.” It is in reality a potential class. In the first place it has for its central stock—like the trunk of a tree—the people who have for ages and generations settled and domiciled in a country, with more or less ethnic identity at bottom and more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation. In the next place it gets added to, from time to time, by the accession of other peoples—like scions engrafted on the central stem, or like creepers attaching thereto—who settle in the country in a like manner, and come under the many unifying influences already referred to, though *still* exhibiting marks of separateness and distinctness. Affirm this standard, and you have an Indian nation. Deny it, and you have a nation *nowhere* on the face of the earth. (*Cheers.*)

A common language, a common religion, inter-dining, and inter-marriage are, without doubt, potent auxiliaries. These help, no doubt, by affordi<sup>ng</sup> ng facili-

ties for co-operation and by rendering easy the attainment of common objects. But, for all that, they are (at best) inseparable accidents, and it betrays a grievous obliquity of judgment to esteem them as constituting the very essence of what is understood by the term *nation*. We began, proceeded, and have persevered up to this day on the tacit assumption that such is the correct doctrine, and let us continue to exert ourselves on that principle, at least as a working definition ; because, by pursuing such a course, and within the short period of seven years, we have accomplished *the great and palpable fact* that the Hindu and Mahomedan populations of this country—long separated from one another—long divided by parochial differences—long kept apart and estranged from one another by sectional and sectarian jealousies—have at last recognised one another as members of a single brotherhood, despite the many differences that still linger. This is a magnificent product of the Congress as a *mighty nationalizer*. The part it has already played in this direction is, indeed, glorious, and I am sure you will not charge me with holding Utopian views if, on the basis of what has been achieved, and in view to the vital interests involved, I venture to predict that, through the agency of the Congress, far more intimate relations and far closer forms of kinship are in store for us in the not remote future.

If this, brethren, is the subjective benefit, we, as the members of the Congress, have secured, what have we to show as its objective results ? I need not accumulate facts to make this clear. Let us first recall to our minds that, when we met at Bombay in the first year of our existence, we were referred to by

the then head of the Indian Government only as an influential and intelligent body. Let us next remember that, when last year we assembled in the capital of this Empire, the present head of the Indian Government stamped and labelled us as an *established constitutional party*, carrying on a *legitimate* work with *legitimate* instruments and according to *acknowledged* methods. This is much for an Indian Viceroy to accept, though it is open to doubt whether we have received *all* our due, and whether we do not, correctly speaking, correspond to a more numerous, more influential, and more favoured party in England. Not only was there this change of opinion about ourselves, but there has been a distinct step taken by the authorities on the lines we had chalked out for reform. What was Lord Cross's India Bill but a confirmation of our views and a response—though a faltering response—to our chorus voice. May we not also justly take credit for the labours (such as they were) of the Public Service Commission and the consequent raising of age for candidates to the Indian Covenanted Service, the inauguration of the policy of a larger recruitment of the Uncovenanted Service from the natives of this country, the creation of a Legislative Council for the N. W. Provinces, and a *marked improvement* in the class or quality of members selected for all the Legislative Councils in the country ever since. These are unmistakable evidences of our objective achievements, and I think, gentlemen, they are such as we may well be proud of.

But, notwithstanding all these grounds for congratulating ourselves, the lamentable fact remains that, *in regard to our higher claims*, little beyond lip-

concession in this country and a half-hearted and halting measure (now shelved) in the imperial metropolis has as yet fallen to our lot. We may work ever so long in this country, the prospect does not seem to brighten; and the real cause may chiefly be that "the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons *has* the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it," as Mr. Yule asserted from his place as the President of our session at Allahabad.

There is no doubt that Mr. Yule's last disjunctive sentence means more than he wished to convey. Nor did he intend all that is signified by his statement that six hundred and fifty odd members, who are bound to be the guardians and protectors of India's rights and liberties, "have thrown the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence back upon the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thought best." Mr. Yule himself made this clear when he virtually told us, almost immediately after, that the members of the House of Commons had not time enough and information enough on the questions that came up before them to be able to judge rightly."

What then is the remedy? On whom is it incumbent to seek and secure the remedy? The answer has been given, that the remedy lies in instructing the British public and in raising their level of information regarding Indian affairs to the standard of usefulness. The further answer has been given, that the duty of seeking and securing that remedy lies primarily on ourselves, secondarily on the British voting and thought-leading public, and finally on their accredited representatives who constitute the

House of Commons. In partial discharge of these duties we have maintained the British Congress Committee, composed of earnest and generous souls working gratuitously for us, with a talented Secretary in Mr. Digby, whose well-informed, timely and earnest efforts in our behalf are the admiration of our friends and a thorn in the ribs of those of our foes, who endeavour to gain a point by deluding an uninstructed public with false and ill-founded representations. No words of mine are necessary to bring home to you the fact that a more capable, self-denying, and benevolent body of men never put their shoulders to a philanthropic work in our interests, and that a larger measure of success was never achieved than was accomplished by them, with their circumscribed opportunities and with many other demands on their time and attention. There are abundant signs that their numbers will increase, and that the sphere of their influence and usefulness will widen, provided we do, as I shall presently show, what is expected of us. A second agency which has come into being, and which is entirely due to British generosity, is the Indian party formed in the House of Commons itself. Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was its brilliant centre-piece, and since death filched that priceless jewel from us, the setting has remained with the socket still to be filled in. Here, again, it depends on ourselves whether *that* gap is to be adequately filled, and that body is to receive, in the requisite measure, accession of strength in numbers and influence; or whether we are to be thrown back a quarter of a century, and find ourselves in the pre-Bradlaugh, pre-Congress, and pre-Ripon days of apathy, obscurity and inert resignation. (*No, no.*)

The anxious and well-considered advice of the British Congress Committee, and the mature opinion of the members of the Parliamentary Indian party, concur in urging us to change the *venue*—to transfer our operations to London itself. Members of our body, who have already rendered yeoman's service in England as our delegates before the British public, are of the same mind. Any doubt that may still linger must be dispelled by the fact that, although Lord Dufferin, as the head of the Indian Government, urged the wisdom and desirability of adopting some form of the elective principle in the constitution of our Legislative Councils, his recommendation, based—be it noted—on his personal grasp of local conditions, has been burked; and that even the makeshift of a limping substitute for it, in the shape of Lord Cross's India Bill, has been shelved and pigeon-holed no one knows for how long, no one can tell with what motives. In the face of such a fate having overtaken the suggestions of the most cautious, diplomatic and wary Viceroy we have had, can we expect that either the present Viceroy, albeit he has put his seal of approval on us as a constitutional party, or any of his successors, will so far *discount their self-respect* as to court a similar summary and unceremonious treatment of their proposals? It seems to me that the cumulative force of all these considerations points unmistakably to the absolute necessity of translating ourselves to London with the Congress banner over our heads, emblazoned with the figure of the Union Jack, as much for indicating our aims and objects, as for fanning away from the delegates assembled under its shade, all the noxious exhalation from those foul mouths which impute to us seditious intentions



and anti-English proclivities,—as if, forsooth, the leaders of the Congress, who are the outcome of the British rule, and whose very existence depends on the maintenance of the British power in India, could be so irrational as to adopt the suicidal policy of lopping off the very branch on which they stand.

This momentous step of holding a meeting in London we can neither avoid nor postpone; and I entreat you to revolve it earnestly in your minds, and to resolve right manfully to do what you finally find to be your plain duty. In regard to this step, I do not say that there are not serious difficulties to overcome. One great barrier—the dread of social ostracism—is not to be got rid of by mere rhetorical outbursts. The question deserves our most serious consideration.

It has to be soberly and dispassionately noted whether the restrictions as to the countries we could visit were not more stringent by far in the earliest times than ever after; whether many regions, originally tabooed in express terms in the Smritis, were not in later days tacitly taken out of the category of forbidden land for an Aryan to enter; whether, in so far as a sea voyage is concerned, a distinction has not been drawn between the north and the south of India on the ground of custom; and whether, where the custom had existed, it was not allowed to be unobjectionable and perfectly compatible with being within the pale of Hinduism; and whether, lastly, and above all, there is not ground for the conclusion that the stringency of the rules in the Smritis has been authoritatively declared to admit of relaxation in so far as the Grihastha is concerned, though not in the case of those who, vowing to consecrate themselves

to a life of piety, practically release themselves from social and political duties and obligations, and are, *therefore*, denied the immunities held out to those who labour *for* and *in* such society.

If we decide in the affirmative, infinite will be our credit. If in so deciding it, we are forsaken by our kith and kin, it will still be considerably to our credit that we have made a heroic sacrifice for the sake of our country and in the interests of those very kith and kin who may be so cruel as to cast us off. But such social persecution and banishment cannot continue for ever. Our cause is so just and righteous, our principles and methods of action so loyal and upright, our opportunities of doing good so many and varied, that in the long run even our worst enemies will learn to find in us their best friends, and such of our kinsmen as estrange themselves from us will, I believe, gladly associate with us again and restore to us the social privileges that they temporarily withhold from us. Such is my belief, judging from precedents, in other, yet analogous, departures. But if the worst should happen, there is already the beginning of a Congress-caste fundamentally based on Hinduism and substantially in accord with its dictates, and such a visitation as a determined social banishment, lasting for any length of time, would only tend to cement that caste more closely together and to greater purpose. Thus would it be possible to form the nucleus of a daily multiplying and expansive fraternity, and it would soon be seen at large that by social union with it there is much to gain in matters mundane and little to lose in interests truly spiritual.

Should we succeed in holding a Session in London, and thereby secure seats for *elected* members

in our Legislative Councils, that in itself would give us much indirect help in pushing on internal reform. A decent interment of rather moribund laws, virtually dead but lingering only to thwart, and the introduction of fresh laws to give an impulse to the betterment of our social condition, are now hopeless impossibilities. The Government fight shy of them, and nominated members, who take their cue from that Government, are equally timorous. If, however, this quiescence is departed from in any instance under the existing system, the Government and the members that lend themselves to the departure at once fall victims to calumnious abuse and unpopularity; for it is quite possible for a minority to raise a powerful cry and give it the character of a popular outburst of indignation. As matters stand, no means exist for gauging the popular feeling for or against the measure. Newspapers have too often given an uncertain sound, and commissions to take evidence cannot sit long enough and examine a large enough number of witnesses to be sure that a correct conclusion has been reached. If, as we propose, elected members should have seats among our legislators, the problem would be fairly solved. Men, seeking election, would find it necessary to present themselves with such proposals as, in their view, might be acceptable to the popular mind, and the fact of their being elected or rejected would, in many cases, afford conclusive proof whether the legislation proposed was well-timed or not, in harmony with popular feeling or at variance with it. Should any dispute arise as to whether a legislative measure proposed is popular or otherwise, the member in charge of it, and members in favour of it, might resign their seats and seek re-election on

that very measure, while the Government, not identifying itself with the measure, would, without incurring any odium, be able to allow useful legislation to go on or to be tried respecting matters which its solicitude, not to be misunderstood and not to incur unpopularity, might make it avoid.

Whatever may be our decision as to the duty of sending a gallant contingent to London to make up the Session of the Congress there, it is undoubtedly imperative on us to penetrate to the masses here more than hitherto, and deeply imbue them with the spirit of the Congress which is only another name for national sentiment. (*Cheers.*) The impression is still prevalent that as yet the effect of our efforts in this direction has been only slight, and we have done little more than to scratch the outer skin and to awaken the spasmodic enthusiasm of our unanglicised brethren. Let us approach them with all the energy and fervour that we have hitherto brought to the Congress platform, but which energy and fervour—so far as the Indian field is concerned—will not, on the present scale, be necessary for that purpose in future, quite apart from the question whether we should close our Congress labours in India for a time.

Whether we resolve to rest on our oars or not, it becomes our bounden duty all the same to go more amid the masses and to saturate their minds with the aspirations of a united nationality. There is another *very solid reason* for such effort. It involves the fulfilment of a trust; for, constituting the upper strata of the Indian society, we have first caught the light of the enlightened West—as mountain tops catch the first glimpses of the rising sun. But, unlike

those glimpses, that light will not descend to the lower strata of our society, unless we actively transmit it from a sense of duty and a sense of honour.

Let us impart to our people, as we are in righteousness bound to do, our conviction that they should cease to look upon the British rule as the rule of a foreign people. We should ask them to look upon our British rulers as filling a gap that has existed in our national economy—as taking the place once held by the Kshatriya, and as being, therefore, part and parcel of the traditional administrative mechanism of the land.

Let us not heed the sinister cry that we shall thereby drag the people of this country into discussing politics—into paths they are supposed never before to have trodden. For our part, *we* shall only act up to the undoubted right involved in the fact that we are England's subjects; and as regards our countrymen at large, they will only be brought back to those privileges, which—unquestioned by authority and with the full knowledge of authority—our ancestors are recorded to have enjoyed in their Samsthas, Sabhas and Ootwaras, in the days treated of in that grand old epic—the Mahabharata.

Gentlemen, I am deeply thankful to you for the patient and indulgent attention you have accorded to me. Our British rulers have indeed withheld from us the privilege of demonstrating our love and loyalty towards our Sovereign Lady, the Empress-Queen, by fighting her battles as volunteers under the British flag; but we have still some consolation left in the fact that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than those of war." The Congress platform is the field on which such bloodless triumphs are to be won,

and though as yet we have had but a small measure of success, there is ground for hope in what the poet sings—

“ For freedom's battle once begun,

\* \* \* \*

Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

We, as the pioneers of the movement, may attain little more than the satisfaction of upholding what is right and protesting against what is wrong; but succeeding generations will reap the fruit of our labours, and will cherish with fond remembrance the names of those who had the courage and the humanity, the singleness of purpose and the self-sacrificing devotion to duty, to work for the benefit of posterity, in spite of calumny and persecution and great personal loss. Men, such as these, may attain no titles of distinction from Government, but they are “nobles by the right of an earlier creation.” They may fail to win honour from their contemporaries as the truest apostles, but they are “priests by the imposition of a mightier hand;” and, when their life's work is done, they will have that highest of all earthly rewards,—the sense of having left their country better than they had found it,—the glory of having built up into a united and compact nation the divers races and classes of the Indian population, and the satisfaction of having led a people, sunk in political and social torpor, to think and act for themselves, and strive to work out their own well-being by constitutional and righteous methods. (*Loud and continued cheers.*)



# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. W. C. BONNERJI, PRESIDENT

OF THE

## EIGHTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT ALLAHABAD ON THE 28TH DECEMBER, 1892.

### VIII.

*"I have always felt that the one great evil of the Indian administration is that our rulers are responsible to no one outside of their own consciences. That they conscientiously endeavour to do what they can for the good government of our country may be accepted as an undeniable fact and accepted with gratitude. But it is not enough that our rulers should only be responsible to their own consciences. After all they are human beings, with human frailties and human imperfections. It is necessary that they should be responsible to those over whom they have been placed by Providence to rule."*

BROTHER DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—  
The position, which, by your unanimous voice, you have called me to fill, is a most distinguished and honourable one. I am proud to fill it, and I trust that, with your help and by your forbearance, I may be able to discharge the duties which will be required of me as the President of the Eighth Indian Congress adequately and satisfactorily. (*Cheers.*) Those duties, as all of you who have attended our Congresses before know, are heavy and onerous in the extreme, and I appeal to you to deal out to me, in the same spirit in



which you dealt out to my predecessors, such help and indulgence as may be needed by me.

You have been reminded that I have the honour to be the person who inaugurated the Congress movement in Bombay, in the year 1885, as its first President. It is a singular coincidence that the Bombay Meeting was held on this very day, the 28th of December. The first cycle of our existence thus commenced on the 28th December, under my humble presidency, and ended with the presidency of my friend Mr. Ananda Charlu, who so kindly proposed my election. The second cycle begins on the same day seven years afterwards, again under my humble presidency. At the first Congress there were only a few of us assembled together, but, as I pointed out at the time, there were various causes which prevented a larger muster. Those, however, who assembled there on that occasion were animated by a sincere desire to make the movement a success, and fully determined that it should be so if hard work could effect it. And I appeal to those assembled here to-day to say whether that movement has been a success or not. (*Applause.*) Year after year we have met, each meeting vieing with its predecessor in the number of delegates attending it, the sacrifices which the delegates made to attend it, in the energy, zeal and determination with which the business was passed through, and the moderation which throughout characterised the proceedings before the Congress. There can be no doubt—say what those who do not view our proceedings with friendly eyes may—that the Congress movement has been a success, and a conspicuous success. The persons to whom I have referred have been troubling their brains, from almost the

very commencement of the movement, to find out how it is that this movement, which they are pleased to call only a "native" movement, has been such a success. And they have hit upon one of the causes, which they have iterated and reiterated, in season and out of season, as the cause of the success of the Congress, namely, the influence over us of that great man Allan Octavian Hume. (*Loud and prolonged cheers.*) That Mr. Hume possesses, and has exercised, a vast amount of influence over the Congress movement, and over each single Congress which has met, is a fact. We are not only not ashamed to acknowledge it, but we acknowledge it with gratitude to that gentleman, and we are proud of his connection with the Congress. (*Cheers.*) But the movement is only to some extent, and I may say, only to a limited extent, due to the influence which Mr. Hume has exercised over us. It is not the influence of this man, or of that man, or of any third man that has made the Congress what it is. It is the British Professors who have discoursed eloquently to us on the glorious constitution of their country; it is the British Merchants who have shown to us how well to deal with the commodities of our country; it is the British Engineers who have annihilated distance and enabled us to come together for our deliberation from all parts of the Empire; it is the British Planters who have shown us how best to raise the products of our soil; it is all these, in other words, it is all the influences which emanate from British rule in India that have made the Congress the success it is. (*Cheers.*) The Congress is a mere manifestation of the good work that has been done by all those to whom I have referred (and I ought also to have

referred to the British missionaries who have worked amongst us); and all that we wish by this movement to do is, to ask the British public, both in this country and in Great Britain, that, without any strain on the connection which exists between Great Britain and this country, such measures may be adopted by the ruling authorities that the grievances under which we labour may be removed, and that we may hereafter have the same facilities of national life that exists in Great Britain herself. How long it will take us to reach the latter end no one can tell; but it is our duty to keep the hope of it before us, and keep reminding our British fellow-subjects that this hope shall always be with us. (*Cheers.*)

Some of our critics have been busy in telling us, thinking they knew our affairs better than we know them ourselves, that we ought not to meddle with political matters, but, leaving politics aside, devote ourselves to social subjects and so improve the social system of our country. I am one of those who have very little faith in the public discussion of social matters; those are things which, I think, ought to be left to the individuals of a community who belong to the same social organization, to do what they can for its improvement. We know how excited people become when social subjects are discussed in public. Not long ago we had an instance of this, when what was called the Age of Consent Bill was introduced into the Viceregal Legislative Council. I do not propose to say one word as to the merits of the controversy that arose over that measure, but I allude to it to illustrate how apt the public mind is to get agitated over these social matters if they are discussed in a hostile and unfriendly spirit in public. But to show

to you that those who organized the Congress movement had not lost sight of the question of social reform, I may state that, when we met in Bombay for the first time, the matter was discussed threadbare, with the help of such distinguished social reformers as Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao of Madras, Mr. Mahadeo Govind Ranade, and Mr. Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar of Poona, Mr. Norendro Nath Sen, and Mr. Jaquinath Ghosal of Calcutta, and others. The whole subject was considered from every point of view, and we at last came to the conclusion, with the full consent and concurrence of those distinguished men, that it would not do for the Congress to meddle itself, as a Congress, with questions of social reform. At the same time we also came to the conclusion, that those gentlemen who were anxious, in a friendly spirit, to discuss their own social organizations should have an opportunity of doing so in the Congress Hall after the business of the Congress should be over. The principal reason which actuated us in coming to that conclusion was that at our gatherings there, would attend delegates following different religions, living under different social systems, all more or less interwoven with their respective religions, and we felt it would not be possible for them as a body to discuss social matters. How is it possible for a Hindu gentleman to discuss with a Parsee or a Mahomedan gentleman matters connected with Hindu social questions? How is it possible for a Mahomedan gentleman to discuss with Hindu and Parsee gentlemen matters connected with Mahomedan social questions? And how is it possible for a Parsee gentleman to discuss with Hindu and Mahomedan gentlemen matters connected with Parsee social

customs ? We thought, and I hope you will agree that we were right, that under the circumstances, all we could do was to leave it to the Hindus and the Mahomedans, Parsees, and other delegates to discuss their respective social matters in a friendly spirit amongst themselves, and arrive at what conclusion they pleased, and, if possible, to get the minority to submit to the views of the majority. (*Cheers.*) I may point out that we do not all understand in the same sense what is meant by social reform. Some of us are anxious that our daughters should have the same education as our sons, that they should go to Universities, that they should adopt learned professions ; others, who are more timid, would be content with seeing that their children are not given in marriage when very young, and that child-widows should not remain widows all the days of their lives. Others, more timid still, would allow social problems to solve themselves. It is impossible to get any common ground, even as regards the members of the same community, be it Hindu, Mahomedan or Parsee, with respect to these matters. Thus it was that social questions were left out of the Congress programme ; thus it was that the Congress commenced, and has since remained, and will, I sincerely trust, always remain as a purely political organization, devoting its energies to political matters, and political matters only. I am afraid that those, whether belonging to our own country or to any other country, who find fault with us for not making social subjects a part of our work, cherish a secret wish that we might all be set by the ears, as we were all set by the ears by the Age of Consent Bill, and that thus we might come to an ignominious end. They

mean us no good, and when we find critics of that description talking of the Congress as only fit to discuss social problems, I think the wider the berth we give them the better. (*Cheers.*)

I, for one, have no patience with those who say we shall not be fit for political reform until we reform our social system. I fail to see any connection between the two. Let me take, for instance, one of the political reforms which we have been suggesting year after year, viz., the separation of Judicial from Executive functions in the same officer. What possible connection can there be between this, which is a purely political reform, and social reform? In the same way, take the Permanent Settlement which we have been advocating, the amendment of the law relating to forests and other such measures;—and I ask again, what have these to do with Social Reforms? Are we not fit for them because our widows remain unmarried and our girls are given in marriage earlier than in other countries? Because our wives and daughters do not drive about with us visiting our friends? Because we do not send our daughters to Oxford or Cambridge? (*Cheers.*)

It is now my sorrowful duty to officially announce to you that death has been busy amongst the ranks of Congressmen during the year just passed. Standing on this platform and speaking in this city, one feels almost an overpowering sense of despair when one finds that the familiar figure and the beloved face of Pandit Ajoodhia Nath is no more. We mourned for him when he died; we have mourned for him since; and those of us who had the privilege of knowing him intimately, of perceiving his kindly heart, his great energy, his great devotion to the

Congress cause, and the sacrifices he made for that cause, will mourn for him to the last. With Pandit Ajoodhia Nath has passed away that other great Congress leader, Mr. George Yule. These were the two most prominent figures in the Congress held in the city in 1888 : Pandit Ajoodhia Nath as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. Yule as the President of the Congress. It was my singular good fortune to have been the means of inducing both these gentlemen to espouse the Congress cause. I was here in April, 1887, and met Pandit Ajoodhia Nath, who had not then expressed his views, one way or another, with regard to Congress matters. I discussed the matter with him. He listened to me with his usual courtesy and urbanity, and he pointed out to me certain defects which he thought existed in our system; and, at last, after a sympathetic hearing of over an hour and a half, he told me he would think of all I had said to him, and that he would consider the matter carefully and thoroughly, and then let me know his views. I never heard anything from him from that time until on the eve of my departure for Madras to attend the Congress of 1887. I then received a letter from him in which he said I had made a convert of him to the Congress cause, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to join us, that he was anxious to go to Madras himself, but that illness prevented him from doing so, and he sent a message, that, if it pleased the Congress to hold its next Sessions at Allahabad in 1888, he would do all he could to make the Congress a success. And you know—certainly, those of you, who attended, know—what a success he did make of it. Our venerable President of the Reception Committee of this present

Congress has told us the difficulties which had to be encountered to make that Congress a success, and I do not belittle his services or those of any other worthy Congressman who worked with him at that Congress, when I say that it was owing to Pandit Ajoodhia Nath's exertions that that Congress was the success it was.

When it was time to select a President for recommendation to the Congress of 1888, it was suggested to me, I being then in England, that I might ascertain the views of Mr. George Yule, and ask him to preside. I accordingly saw him at his office in the City, and had the same kind of conversation with him as I had had, the year before, with Pandit Ajoodhia Nath. He also listened to me kindly, courteously and sympathetically, and asked me to give him all the Congress literature I had. I had only the three Reports of the Congress meetings of 1885, 1886 and 1887, and I sent these to him; and to my great joy, and, as it afterwards turned out, to the great benefit of the Congress, Mr. Yule came to see me at my house and told me that he entirely sympathized with the cause, and that, if elected to be the President of the Congress of that year, he would be proud of the position and would do what he could for us. Those who had the good fortune to attend the Congress of 1888 know how manfully and how well he sustained the duties of his position; how he pointed out that the chief plank in the Congress platform—namely, the reform and re-constitution of the Legislative Councils of this country—was by no means an invention on the part of the Congress; that that point had received the attention and had been favourably considered and spoken of by that marvellous English Statesman,



Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. He told us that we were treading on the footsteps of that great man, and that, if we perseveringly stuck to our colours, some time or other we should get what we wanted. From that time to the day of his death Mr. Yule worked with us, gave us his valuable advice, and helped us considerably as regards our working expenses. Pandit Ajoodhia Nath, as you know, from the time he joined the Congress, worked early, worked late, worked with the old, worked with the young, never spared any personal sacrifices, so that he might do good to his country and to the Congress, and his lamented death came upon him when he was coming back from Nagpore, after having worked there for the success of the Nagpore Congress of last year. Those who ever so slightly knew Pandit Ajoodhia Nath and Mr. Yule will never be able to forget the great services which those gentlemen rendered to the Congress cause.

From Madras we have the sad news of the death of Salem Rama Swami Moodeliar. He was an earnest worker and did yeoman's service to the cause of his country. In 1885 he was one of a band of three who were deputed to go to Great Britain during the then general election, his colleagues being Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar of Bombay, and Mr. Mon Mohun Ghose of Calcutta, and these three devoted men vied with each other as to who could do the most work for the benefit of his country. Salem Rama Swami Moodeliar served on the Public Service Commission, and we all know the bitter disappointment he felt when the Secretary of State for India did not carry out what he had hoped he would, namely, accept the recommendations of the Public Service Commission

as a whole. There were some recommendations of the Commission which Salem Rama Swami Moodeliar, and those who worked with him, did not approve, but in order that the recommendations of which they approved might be carried into effect, he and his colleagues gave in their adhesion to them, and all joined in signing the Report. I remember that the Report did not give any satisfaction to the country at large. We had discussions on the subject at the Congress of 1888, and some of us were very anxious that that Report should be disavowed, and that we should, by a resolution, tell the Government that the recommendations of the Commission did not come up to our expectations at all. Salem Rama Swami Moodeliar advised us not to agitate the matter then, but wait until the Secretary of State's orders were out. If, he said, the Secretary of State accepted those recommendations the matter might well be allowed to rest for some years to come; but if he did not do so, then he, Rama Swami Moodeliar, would be the first to re-open the question and carry on the agitation to the end of his life, if necessary. He was a sagacious and courageous man, and in him the Congress has lost a leader of eminence and earnestness. In Madras we have also lost G. Mahadeo Chetty and Ramaswamy Naidu, both earnest Congress workers, and they will be missed by their Congress friends and acquaintances. In Bengal we have had two heavy losses by the death of Pran Nath Pandit and Okhoy Coomar Dass. Pran Nath Pandit was the worthy son of a worthy father, the late Mr. Justice Sumbhoonath Pandit—the first native gentleman who was appointed to the Bench of the High Court;—and though he died young, he was of great service to his country and to our cause, and

had he been spared he would have done still greater services. Okhoy Coomar Dass was a younger man still, but his energy was great, and as a public man he outshone many of his contemporaries in Lower Bengal. It was due to him that many abuses in our Courts of Justice were exposed, and it was due to him that Howrah owes its Standing Congress Committee. We grieve for all these spirits who have passed away from us, and I would beg leave, on behalf of this Congress, to express to their respective families our respective and reverential condolences in the great loss that has overtaken them. "Sorrow shared is sorrow soothed," says the old adage, and if that be a fact, I have no doubt that our sympathy will go somewhat towards assuaging the grief of their families.

Gentlemen, I must now proceed to call your attention to subjects more exciting, though, with the exception of a couple of them, I am not in a position to say, they are more cheering. The first piece of cheering news I have is that Lord Cross's India Councils Bill, after delays which seemed to many of us to be endless, has at last passed through the Houses of Parliament and received the royal assent. From what we have been able to gather from the speeches delivered by the Viceroy during his tour in Madras, it would seem that the Rules under which the Act is to be given effect to are now under the consideration of the Government of India. We all know that the Act in terms does not profess to give us much, but it is capable, I believe, of infinite expansion under the Rules that are to be framed. If those Rules are framed in the spirit in which the present Prime Minister of England understood the Act was framed, and what he said was assented to

by the then Under-Secretary of State for India, namely, that the people of India were to have real living representation in their Legislative Councils, —if those Rules are framed in the spirit of true statesmanship, statesmanship such as one would have confidently expected from Sir Thomas Munro, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Lord William Bentinck and a host of other distinguished Anglo-Indian statesmen who have made British India what she is—I have no doubt we shall all be glad to put away the first plank in our Congress platform, namely, the reform and reconstitution of the Legislative Councils. The spirits that seem to be abroad just now in this country, however, do not seem to me to give a very hopeful augury as to these Rules. I am afraid that some of our rulers have been possessed with the idea that we have been progressing too fast. It is a great pity that this should be so. But if these rules do not come up to our expectations, gentlemen, we must go on with our agitation and not stop until we get what we all think and we all believe, and, what is more, what our rulers themselves have taught us to believe, we have a right to get. (*Cheers.*)

Another cheering event to which I have to call attention is the return of our leader, our revered leader, Dadabhai Naoroji (*three cheers*), to sit in the House of Commons as member for Central Finsbury. You all know it had been hoped that he would be able to come out from England to occupy the position I am now occupying. We all looked forward to his presence amongst us with hopefulness and trust and with great satisfaction, because, if he had been with us, we could have shown to him, face to face, that our confidence in him is just as high as it ever was.

We could have told him, by word of mouth, of the great joy which spread throughout the length and breadth of India when the news of his return to the House of Commons was received, of the anxiety with which we watched the fate of the election petition which was presented against his return, and how glad we were that it was at last withdrawn. And he could have carried back with him to England our message of gratitude to the electors of Central Finsbury (*cheers*), and have shown them that in electing him as their representative they had also elected a representative for the people of India in the House of Commons. (*Cheers.*) Unfortunately, his opponent, Captain Penton, had presented that hateful petition, and just at the moment that Mr. Naoroji was to have made his preparations to come out to India it was fixed to be heard. Mr. Naoroji had to stay. There was a hand-to-hand struggle, and it was at last found that the number of votes for the two candidates was on a level. Captain Penton must have felt that if he went on any further his number might come down, and then Mr. Naoroji would retain his seat and Captain Penton would have to pay all the costs. He thought discretion the better part of valour, and prudently withdrew his petition, each party paying his own costs, and the seat of Mr. Naoroji is now perfectly safe. And as long as this present Parliament lasts he will remain our member (*cheers*), and we shall get all the help it is possible for him to give us in the cause of Indian reforms. But we must not expect too much from him. He is but one in a House of 670 members, and though he will do for us all that prudence, good sense, vast knowledge and great eloquence can do, yet he is single-handed.

To be strong, he must receive all the support he can from this country, and backed by that support he may be able to put our case convincingly before the House. But what we really want is not that our countrymen generally should sit in the House of Commons. Englishmen themselves find it extremely hard to find seats there, how much more must we who are "black men." What we want and have a right to get is that our countrymen should have the opportunity of really representing to the Government the views of the people of this country in this country. What we want is that there should be responsible Government in India. I have always felt that the one great evil of the Indian administration is that our rulers are responsible to no one outside of their own consciences. That they conscientiously endeavour to do what they can for the good government of our country may be accepted as an undeniable fact and accepted with gratitude. But it is not enough that our rulers should only be responsible to their own consciences. After all they are human beings, with human frailties and human imperfections. It is necessary that they should be responsible to those over whom they have been placed by Providence to rule. (*Cheers.*) In making these observations I have not lost sight of the fact that the Government of India in India is responsible to the Government of India in Westminster, and that the Government of India in Westminster is responsible to the Cabinet of the day, of which he is invariably one of the members. Nor have I forgotten that the Cabinet of the day is responsible to the House of Commons. But when you come to consider what this responsibility really is, I think, you will all agree with me

that I have not overstated the case in the slightest degree. Unless the Secretary of State for India happen to be a personage of exceptional force of character and of great determination, such as the late Prime Minister proved to be when he was in charge of the India Office, he generally, to use Burke's language, says "ditto" to the Government of India in India. The Cabinet is so troubled with the affairs of the vast British Empire that the members really have no time to devote to India as a body, and leave her to their colleague, the Secretary of State for India. When any Indian question comes before the House of Commons, what do we see? The Cabinet of the day has always a majority in the House, and it always finds supporters among its own party, whether they are would-be placemen or whether they are country gentlemen who go to the House of Commons as the best club in England. (*Cheers.*) And in non-party matters—and they make it a pretence in the House of Commons to regard Indian affairs as matters non-party—in all non-party matters, the Government of the day can always rely upon a large amount of support from the opposition. (*Hear, hear.*) There are a few members of the House of Commons who make it a point to devote a portion of their time and energies to the consideration of Indian questions. But they are only a few; they have hardly any following, and if they press any matters on the attention of the House, with any degree of zeal, they are voted down as bores by the rest of the House of Commons. (*Hear, hear.*) Of course the case of Mr. Bradlaugh (*cheers*) was entirely different. He was a most masterful man, and by his mastery over his fellowmen he attained the position for himself which

he occupied in the House of Commons at the time of his death. There are but few in England like Mr. Bradlaugh. I am sorry to say that since the death of that great man we have not been able to find one who possesses his capacity, possesses his knowledge, or possesses the influence which he exercised over the House of Commons. Therefore, when you consider what the responsibility of the Government of India is to the Government of England and the House of Commons, you will not, I think, be able to come to any other conclusion than that it is *nil*. (*Hear, hear.*)

By the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on lines that would allow representatives of the people to be elected to these Councils, the Government would be face to face with them. They would know, at first hand, what the real feelings and the real grievances of the people are. (*Hear, hear.*) They would then be able to devise measures which would be in consonance with the feelings of the people, and which would get rid of their grievances. At present the *modus operandi* is this. A Secretary thinks that a particular measure ought to be passed, and it may be taken that he honestly believes that the measure would be for the benefit of the country. He invites two or three Indian gentlemen of eminence, with whom he is acquainted, to see him. He speaks to them in private, and gets their views, which, unfortunately, in the case of these Indian gentlemen, generally coincide with the views he himself holds. (*Laughter.*) The measure is passed. There is a great cry of indignation in the country. The answer of the Government is—"Oh, but we consulted the leaders of your society, and it is with their help this measure has been passed." I hold that the time has



passed for this sort of statesmanship. If the Government make a real effort to arrive at what the views of the country and people generally are, I have no doubt that they will be able so to shape their policy as to give satisfaction to all concerned. This, to my mind, is the chief thing that we need. (*Hear, hear.*) In the Councils our representatives will be able to interpellate the Government with regard to their policy and the mode in which that policy is being given effect to. My conviction is, that the weal and woe of our country is not so much dependent upon the Viceroy or the Local Governor, however sympathetic and kind, but upon the officials who have to administer the law and come in contact with the people. Until there is the right of interpellation granted to us in our own Councils there will be no true responsibility on the part of our Government. I repeat that those who are placed over us—our Viceroys, Governors, Lieutenant-Governors and others of lesser degree—are more or less actuated by the desire to do us good, both for their own sake as well as for the sake of the people of the country ; but the system under which they work is a vicious one, and the result is, no good is really done. (*Cheers.*)

Now, gentlemen, while a Conservative Government has given us this Indian Councils Bill, and a Radical constituency has sent one of our countrymen to the House of Commons, showing in the first instance some, and in the second, a great amount of liberality, here in this country, we have had in a neighbouring province a policy adopted which has made a painfully profound sensation over the whole of this vast empire—a sensation which it will take

a very long time to allay. In the first place, though we, in this Congress, and the country generally, have been pressing and pressing and pressing the Government not to take away the grants for education, but to increase those grants so far as the provinces of Bengal and Bombay are concerned, grants-in-aid of high education have been doomed. Government require, they say, money for primary education; they do not wish to spend money upon high education. I am not one of those who believe that primary education is not required. I think it is as much required as high education. But I confess I do not understand for a moment why it is necessary to starve high education in order that primary education may be provided for and protected. (*Cheers.*) Government ought to foster education of all kinds alike; it ought to spend its resources upon every kind of education (*renewed cheers*) for the people; not only primary education, but technical education of all kinds, and also high education. It is said,—“You who have had, and who appreciate, high education ought to maintain it yourselves.” I know of no other country in which such a thing as this has been said by the Government to the people they rule over. It is one of the first duties of the Government to educate the people just as it is their duty to protect them from thieves and robbers. (*Cheers.*) If they tell the people to-day—“Go and educate yourselves,” why should they not tell them to-morrow—“You are rich and can afford to keep durwans. Go and protect yourselves against thieves and robbers, we will not do so.” (*Cheers.*)

But the sensation, to which I have referred, is one not so much due to the doings of our Bengal and

Bombay Governments as regards high education, as to the notification which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has lately issued, withdrawing trial by jury in serious cases from the seven Districts in Bengal, where the system of trial by jury has been in existence for some years. (*Cries of "Shame."*) The plea upon which this notification has been based is that trial by jury has been a failure as a means for the repression of crime. (*Cries of "Shame," and "No, no."*) Can it be said that if a Sessions Judge trying a case with the assistance of Assessors and without the assistance of a jury acquit a prisoner, that he is a failure as a means for the repression of crime? If that cannot be said with regard to Sessions Judges, with what justice can it be said in regard to juries? (*Cheers.*) Those of us who have had any acquaintance with the subject, have long felt that the administration of criminal justice in this country has been extremely unsatisfactory. There has not been much said about it, because it affects people, the majority of whom are poor men—men who cannot make much noise. They submit to what takes place, grumble among their fellows, and cry *kismut*. Now let us see how the matter stands. While in civil cases the evidence is taken down in the language in which the witness gives it by an officer specially appointed for the purpose, and in appeals the evidence thus taken down is made the basis of the judgment of the Appellate Court where it differs from the notes of the Judge, in criminal cases the evidence is, as a rule, taken down by the presiding officer in English. Most of these presiding officers are gentlemen who come to us here from Great Britain. They, no doubt, try and learn the languages of the people they are sent out to govern, but the circumstan-

ces in which they are placed and the circumstances in which the people of this country are placed are such that they are compelled to live in utter isolation from one another. You may read the books of a country, you may know its literature well, but unless you have a familiar acquaintance with the people of the country, unless you have mixed familiarly with them, it is impossible for you to understand the language these people speak. Why is there so much outcry about what is called "Babu English?" Many Babus, and in this designation I include my countrymen from all parts of India, know English literature better, I make bold to say, than many educated men in England. (*Cheers.*) They know English better and English literature better than many Continental English scholars. They know English History as well, if not better than Englishmen themselves. Why is it, then, that when they write English, when they speak English, they sometimes make grievous blunders? Why is it, then, that their composition is called stilted? Because their knowledge is derived from books only and not from contact with the people of England. If an English gentleman were to write a book or a letter, in the vernacular with which he is supposed to be most familiar, I am afraid his composition would bear a great family likeness to "Babu English." It would be "English Vernacular." It would contain grammatical mistakes which would even shame our average school-boy. Let an English gentleman, thoroughly acquainted with the vernacular of a district, speak to a native of that district. His pronunciation would be such that the native, even if educated, would find it difficult to understand him. It is gentlemen of this description

who hear country-people, called as witnesses before them, give their evidence in the vernacular. How is it possible for them to understand them correctly? How much do you think of what these witnesses say to the Judge is taken down correctly and finds a place in the Judge's notes? (*Little or nothing.*)

—And when an appeal is preferred to the Appellate Court, it is this evidence, and this evidence alone, upon which the Judges of that Court have to act. When the District Judge tries a civil case, he has the plaint and written statement translated for him into English by his clerk. The evidence given before him is, as a rule, interpreted to him by the pleaders on either side. But when the same District Judge acts in his capacity as Sessions Judge and presides over criminal trials, he, as a rule, takes down the evidence, without the aid of interpreters, in English, and he charges the jury, in jury cases, in the vernacular of the country. (*Laughter.*) The Indian Penal Code has been translated into all the vernaculars of the country, and those who know these languages and who know English, I think, are agreed that it is extremely difficult to make out what the vernacular Penal Code means; and charging the jury in the vernacular means that the Judges have to explain the Penal Code to them in the vernacular—a superhuman task almost! Again, while in civil cases, pleaders, and particularly pleaders of position, are allowed a free hand as regards cross-examination, in criminal cases, particularly in cases where the accused is unable to employ pleaders of eminence, but is compelled to have either junior pleaders or muktyars, the cross-examination of the witnesses may be said almost to be a farce. The presiding officer gets impatient in a

very short time, cuts short the cross-examination at his own sweet will and pleasure, and in many cases most important facts are not elicited in consequence. (*Hear, hear.*) While in civil appeals, you, as a rule, get a patient hearing, the argument sometimes lasting for days, just think, those of you who have any experience of these Courts, what takes place when criminal appeals are heard by Sessions Judges in the mofussil! They are often taken up at the fag end of the day and listened to with impatience, and then is asked the almost invariable question, as the Judge, after hearing the appeal for a few minutes, is about to rise for the day—"Have you anything more to say? I will read the papers for myself and give the decision to-morrow." The Judge rises, and the poor man's appeal is over. Some appeals are dismissed and some, though this is more rare, are allowed. Again, while in civil cases there is hardly any fear of their being decided on facts outside the record, in criminal cases there is the greatest fear that outside influence is brought to bear upon the presiding officer. The thing is inevitable when you consider that the District Magistrate is the real head of the police of the district, and that all officers trying criminal cases, except the Sessions Judge, are subordinate to him and depend on him for promotion; and as regards the Sessions Judges themselves, they may, by the system which has now been introduced of dividing the Civil Service into two branches, find themselves independent of the District Magistrate one day and his subordinate the next, during the time he oscillates as acting Sessions Judge and Joint Magistrate, as not unoften happens. Again, in civil cases we have the right of appeal as of course, and, if they are of

sufficient value, of appealing to Her Majesty in Council; in criminal cases we have to apply for leave to appeal, and have our appeal only from the Sessions Judge to the High Court, and from the inferior judiciary to the Sessions Judge, and in some cases to the District Magistrates. There are many other points to which attention may be called, but I think I have said enough to convince those who are not familiar with the matter, that I was right when I said that the administration of criminal justice in this country was most unsatisfactory. (*Cheers.*) The only safeguard which accused persons have against this system in Sessions cases is trial by jury. (*Hear, hear.*) And now the notification of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal withdraws the safeguard from the seven districts in Bengal where it existed, and the whole of India has been threatened with a like withdrawal. (*Cries of "Shame."*) The question is not a provincial but an imperial one, and of the highest importance. I therefore think it is our duty to take this question up and help our Bengal brethren to the utmost extent of our power to get back what they have lost, and to see that other parts of the country are not overtaken by the same fate. (*Hear, hear.*)

Let us for the moment consider what is the meaning of "trial by jury having failed as a means for the repression of crime." One of the learned Judges of the Calcutta High Court, who was consulted upon this matter, I refer to Mr. Justice Beverley said that he did not think that a person bent upon committing a crime would stop to think whether, if he was detected, he would be tried by a Judge with a jury or tried by a Judge with the aid of assessors. (*Loud cheers.*) Judges and jury do not sit to repress

crime, but to ascertain if crime has been committed, and if the jury find that crime has been committed, the Judge punishes the offender. (*Cheers.*) It is the duty of the police to see that crime is not committed, and when, in spite of their vigilance, crime is committed, to bring the offender to justice. In this country, where, unfortunately, the police are not over-scrupulous as to how they get up cases, trial by jury is the most essential safeguard against injustice. Jurymen being drawn from the people themselves, are better able to understand the language in which witnesses give their evidence, better able to understand and appreciate the demeanour of witnesses—the twists and turns in their answers, the rolling of their eyes, the scratching of their heads, and various other contortions of their physiognomy which witnesses go through to avoid giving straight answers to straight questions—than the Judge, upon whom, unless he be an officer of exceptional and brilliant talents, they are lost. (*Hear, hear.*) A former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, himself a Sessions Judge of large experience, and therefore able to speak with authority on the subject—I allude to the late Sir A. Rivers Thompson—said in regard to jurymen, that they were more scrupulous in accepting police evidence than the Judges were, and that it was quite right that it should be so. The law allows Sessions Judges to make references to the High Court if they differ from the verdict of a jury. These references come up before the High Court, and the learned Judges of that Court have before them only the evidence, recorded in English, by the Sessions Judge, the evidence recorded in the Court of the Committing Magistrate and the Judge's charge. Though they may be



men of brilliant talents, men of great experience, men of great conscientiousness, I still venture to think that it is impossible for them—human beings as they are—reading merely the dry bones of the evidence placed before them upon paper, to come to a correct conclusion as to whether the Judge was right or the jury were right. (*Cheers.*) If they heard the evidence given by the witnesses in their presence, their conclusion would no doubt be accepted as mere satisfactory, and if they differed from the jury it might be that the jury were wrong, but under the present system how can that be done? How can it be said that, when they accept the opinion of the Sessions Judge, the Sessions Judges are right and the jury wrong? And in many of these references the High Courts have accepted the verdict of the jury and differed from the recommendation of the Judge. (*Cheers.*) The only ground for saying that the system of trial by jury has failed is, as I understand, that the High Court has in some instances differed from them and adopted the recommendation of the Sessions Judge. I have told you it is impossible—regard being had to the limitation of human nature—to say with confidence who was right and who was wrong; but assuming that the jury were wrong in many instances, and that they had given improper verdicts, what is the consequence? A few more persons who would have been in jail are now free men. What then? Has there been any complaint on the part of the people of these seven districts that they went about in fear of their lives, because, by the obstinacy and perversity of jurymen, accused persons who ought to have been condemned to death had been set free? (*Hear, hear.*) Did any one say that

he or she regarded the system with disfavour, or dislike or fear? Had any one suggested that the system should be abolished? I say emphatically, No! No complaint reached the Government from the people affected that the system had failed. It is the overflowing desire on the part of the Government to do good to us that has been the cause of the withdrawal of this system! Save us from our well-wishers, say I. (*Loud cheers.*) I could have understood the action of Government if there had been any hue and cry in the country on the subject. I could have understood it if any representation had come from those affected to the Government; but under the circumstances this bolt from the blue I do not understand and cannot appreciate. (*Loud applause.*) It is said that trial by jury is foreign to this country. We who have cherished our Panchayet system for generations to be told that trial by jury is foreign to us, to be told so at the fag end of the nineteenth century, why, it is strange indeed! No, no, gentlemen—it was on our Panchayet system that Lord Cornwallis proceeded, when, in 1790, he ruled that we should have trial by jury. It was on that system that Sir Thomas Munro based his regulation which his successor promulgated in 1827. It was on that system that the Bombay regulation on the subject was introduced, and, when these regulations were codified in 1861, it was on that system the law was based. We must have the system extended to the whole country and not withdrawn from any part of it, and we must, therefore, join together and agitate on the subject from one end of India to the other, and say that the notification, which has given rise to so much discontent, was not required, and that it should be withdrawn, and withdrawn as

speedily as possible, and the policy of which it is the outcome reversed. (*Loud applause.*)

I am afraid, gentlemen, I have detained you longer than I should have done. (*Cries of "No, no," and "Go on."*) I have but a few more words to say, and these I shall say as briefly as I can. I said at the outset that the Congress movement has been a great success, but it behoved us all to make it even a greater success than it is. During the jury agitation in Bengal I was greatly pained, more pained than I can describe, by one of the apologists of the Government saying openly in his paper, that the agitation against the jury notification was of no account because it was only a "native" agitation, and that no Europeans had joined it. As a matter of fact, I know from personal knowledge that a great many very respectable and independent gentlemen in Calcutta joined the movement and cordially sympathised with it. But supposing it had been otherwise? This same apologist has, day after day, pointed out that the withdrawal of trial by jury, in these seven Bengal districts, in serious cases, does not in any way touch European or European British subjects. If he is right in this, it is a matter of no surprise that Europeans have not joined the movement. But because Europeans have not joined the movement, is a movement of the people of this country to be despised? Is our voice not to be listened to because, forsooth, to that voice has not been added the voice of our European fellow-subjects? (*Hear, hear and cheers.*) We would welcome, welcome with open arms, all the support which we can get from our European fellow-subjects. I believe, that so far as the non-official Europeans are concerned, their interests and ours, in this

country, are the same ; we all desire that there should be a development of the resources of the country and that there should be enough for all who are here, whether for a time or in perpetuity. (*Hear, hear.*) But apart from that, why is our voice to be despised ? It is we who feel the pinch ; it is we who have to suffer, and when we cry out, it is said to us, " O ! we cannot listen to you ; yours is a contemptible, and useless and a vile agitation, and we will not listen to you." Time was when we natives of the country agitated about any matter, with the help of non-official Europeans, the apologists of the Government used to say triumphantly, " this agitation is not the agitation of the natives of the country, but has been got up by a few discontented Europeans ; don't listen to them, it is not their true voice ; it is the voice of these Europeans." But now we are told, " don't listen to them, it is their own voice and not the voice of the Europeans." (*Shame.*) It is sad that such reflections should be published by responsible journalists pretending to be in the confidence of our rulers. I hope and confidently trust that these are not the sentiments by which any administration in India is actuated. I hope and trust that, when we make respectful representations to the Government, they will be considered on their own merits, whether we are joined in our agitation by our European fellow-subjects or whether we stand by ourselves ; and in order that these representations of ours, not only on the question, but on other questions which touch us, succeed, it is necessary that we, in our Congress, work and work with a will. It is not enough that you should come from long distance and be present at the annual sittings of the Congress. It is

necessary, when you go back to your respective provinces and districts, that you should display the same zeal and interest there. It has been the habit to leave the whole of the Congress work to the Secretary. We go back to our districts and sleep over it and leave the Secretary to do all he can for the business, in the shape of getting money, and then, when it is time for the sessions to be held, we put on our best clothes, pack up our trunks and go. But that is not work. Let us all on our parts act zealously and make sacrifices: without money it is impossible to be successful in anything. Let each of us go back and help our respective Secretaries; let us try and get as much money as we can for the success of the cause. (*Hear, hear.*)

You all know that our cause has the support of some distinguished men in England, who form what is called the Congress Committee in England. They are willing to give us their services unstintingly, ungrudgingly, but you cannot expect them to give their services to us at their own expense. You cannot expect that the necessary expenses required for the hiring of rooms, for the printing of papers, for the despatch of telegrams, and all other things necessary for carrying on the great cause shall be paid out of their own pockets. We must do our best to support them; we must do our best to support the cause; and, if we are true to ourselves, if we are true to our principles, if we are true to our country, be assured that in the fulness of time all that you require from the benign Government of the British nation, all that you seek from them to make you true citizens will be given to you by that nation. (*Loud and prolonged applause.*)

# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI, M.P., PRESIDENT

OF THE

## NINTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT LAHORE ON THE 27TH DECEMBER, 1893.

IX.

*"This Congress represents the Aristocracy of intellect and the New Political Life, created by themselves, which is at present deeply grateful to its Creator. Common sense tells you—have it with you, instead of against you."*

*"Were the people of British India allowed to enjoy the fruits of their own labour and resources, and were fair relations established between the British and Indian peoples, with India contented and prosperous, Britain may defy half a dozen Russias. Indians will then fight to the last man and to the last rupee for their share as patriots and not as mercenaries. The rulers will have only to stamp their foot, and millions will spring up to defend the British power and their own hearths and homes."*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I need not say how deeply I feel the honour you have done me by electing me a second time to preside over your deliberations. I thank you sincerely for this honour. In the performance of the onerous duties of this high position I shall need your great indulgence and support, and I have no doubt that I shall receive them. (*Applause.*)

I am much pleased that I have the privilege of presiding at the very first Congress held in Punjab,

as I had at Calcutta in 1886. I have taken, as you may be aware, some interest in the material condition of Punjab. In my first letter to the Secretary of State for India, in 1880, on the material condition of India, I took Punjab for my illustration, and worked out in detail its total annual income and the absolute wants of its common labourer. As to the loyalty of the Punjabis—Hindus, Sikhs, or Mahomedans—it has proved true through the most fiery ordeal on a most trying and critical occasion. (*Applause.*)

The occasion of this session of the Congress in Punjab has been a most happy coincidence. On Punjab rests a double responsibility—one external and one internal. If ever that hated threatened invasion of the Russians comes on, Punjab will have to bear the first brunt of the battle, and contented under British rule, as I hope India will be, Punjab will fight to her last man in loyalty and patriotism—loyalty to the British power, and patriotism to protect the hearths and homes of her beloved country of India. (*Loud applause.*)

The internal responsibility which at present rests upon the Punjabis and other warrior races of India is this. I have always understood and believed that manliness was associated with love of justice, generosity and intellect. So our British tutors have always taught us, and have always claimed for themselves such character. And I cannot understand how any one could or should deny to your and other manly races of India the same characteristics of human nature. But yet we are gravely told that on the contrary the manliness of these races of India is associated with meanness, unpatriotic selfishness, and inferiority of intellect, and that, therefore, like the dog in the

manger, you and the other warrior races will be mean enough to oppose the resolution about Simultaneous Examinations, and unpatriotic and selfish enough to prevent the general progress of all India. ("Shame.")

Can offence and insult to a people, and that people admitted to be a manly people, go any further? Look at the numbers of Punjabis studying in England. Now, this happy coincidence of this meeting in Punjab: you, considering every son of India as an Indian and a compatriot, have invited me—not a Punjabi, not a Mahomedan, nor a Sikh—from a distance of thousands of miles, to enjoy the honour of presiding over this Congress, and with this gathering from all parts of India as the guests of the Punjabis, you conclusively, once for all and for ever, set the matter at rest: that the Punjabis with all other Indians do earnestly desire the Simultaneous Examinations as the only method in which justice can be done to all the people of India, as this Congress has repeatedly resolved. And, moreover, Punjab has the credit of holding the very first public meeting in favour of the Resolution passed by the House of Commons for Simultaneous Examinations. (*Cheers.*)

When I use the words English or British, I mean all the peoples of the United Kingdom.

It is our melancholy duty to record the loss of one of our greatest patriots, Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang. It is a heavy loss to India; you all know what a high place he held in our estimation for his great ability, learning, eloquence, sound judgment, wise counsel and leadership. I have known him and worked with him for many years, and I have not known any one more earnest and devoted to the cause of our country's welfare. He was one of the most



active founders of this Congress, and was its first hard-working Secretary in Bombay. From the very first he had taken a warm interest and active part in our work, and even after he became a Judge his sound advice was always at our disposal.

I am glad Mr. Mahadev Govind Ranade is appointed in his place. (*Cheers.*) It does much credit indeed to Lord Harris for the selection, and I am sure Mr. Ranade will prove himself worthy of the post. I have known him long, and his ability and learning are well known. (*Applause.*) His sound judgment and earnest work in various ways have done valuable services to the cause of India. (*Applause.*)

I am also much pleased that an Indian, Mr. Pramad Charan Bannerji, succeeds Mr. Justice Mahmud at Allahabad. (*Cheers.*)

I feel thankful to the Local Governments and the Indian Government for such appointments, and to Lord Kimberley for his sanction of them, among which I may include also the decision about the Sanskrit Chair at Madras. (*Applause.*) I feel the more thankful to Lord Kimberley, for I am afraid, and I hope I may be wrong, that there has been a tendency of not only not loyally carrying out the rule about situations of Rs. 200 and upwards to be given to Indians, but that even such posts as have been already given to them are being snatched away from their hands. Lord Kimberley's firmness in not allowing this is, therefore, so much the more worthy of praise and our thankfulness.

Lord Kimberley also took prompt action to prevent the retrograde step in connection with the jury system in Bengal for which Mr. Paul and other friends interested themselves in Parliament ; and also

to prevent the retrograde interference with the Chairmanship of Municipalities at the instance of our British Committee in London. I do hope that in the same spirit Lord Kimberley will consider our representations about the extension of the jury system.

Before proceeding further, let me perform the gratifying task of communicating to you a message of sympathy and goodwill which I have brought for you from Central Finsbury. (*Loud applause and three cheers for the electors of Central Finsbury.*) On learning that I had accepted your invitation to preside, the Council of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association passed a Resolution, which I have now the pleasure of placing before you, signed by Mr. Joseph Walton, the Chairman, and forwarded to me by the Honorary Secretary, Mr. R. M. H. Griffith, one of my best friends and supporters:—

The Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association, in view of Mr. Naoroji's visit to India at the end of November next, have passed the following Resolution:—

“1. That the General Council of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association desire to record their high appreciation of the admirable and most exemplary manner in which Mr. Dada-bhai Naoroji has performed his duties as representative of this constituency in the House of Commons, and, learning that he is, in the course of a few months, to visit India to preside over the Ninth Session of the Indian National Congress, request him to communicate to that body an expression of their full sympathy alike with all the efforts of that Congress for the welfare of India, and with the Resolution which has been recently passed by the House of Commons (in

the adoption of which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has been so largely instrumental) in favour of holding Simultaneous Examinations in India and in Britain of candidates for 'all the Indian Civil Services'; and further express the earnest hope that full effect will, as speedily as possible, be given by the Government to this measure of justice which has been already too long delayed. (*Applause.*)

"2. That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji.

(Signed) JOSEPH WALTON,

*Chairman of Meeting."*

The Resolution has been sent to Mr. Naoroji with an accompanying letter, which says:—

"Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association, 20, St. John Street Road, Clerkenwell, London, E.C.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been directed to forward to you the enclosed copy of Resolution passed at the last meeting of the Council of this Association.

"Joining in the hope of my colleagues that the result of our efforts may be of material and lasting good, and wishing you a fruitful journey, with a speedy return to us, the constituents you so worthily represent in Parliament,

I am, yours faithfully,

R. M. H. GRIFFITHS,

*Honorary Secretary."*

"The Honourable DADABHAI NAOROJI, M. P.,  
House of Commons, Westminster.

*August 7th, 1893."*

It has been my good fortune and happy privilege of being present at the first Session, in 1885; with about eighty delegates. Eight years have since passed

away, and we meet to-day for the ninth time. The first question which naturally now arises is—Has the Congress justified its existence? Has it borne any good fruit? I say that it has done both. But it is more. Its existence is also the justification and the best proof of the bright side of the British rule. (*Cheers.*) If any proof were wanted, that British rule has not been altogether without good results, the British people may well point with pride and satisfaction to the unique phenomenon of this Congress as the result of the beneficent part of their work in this country. (*Applause.*)

Dealing with its own justification of itself, we may look back to the Resolutions which were formulated at its first session and see what has been accomplished therefrom.

The Legislative Councils have been reformed, if not even to the moderate extent and in the manner in which we desired, still some advance has been made in their constitution and mode of work. Representation, though small and very imperfect, is, even as it is, a vital step for our future progress and for the consolidation of British power. The right of interpellation will enable us, with much advantage and relief to Government itself, to ask some explanations directly and immediately, without having to wait for the circuitous process of questions in the House of Commons.

These small reforms in the Legislative Councils have, by their operation, indirectly brought out prominently, and undeniably proved, the truly representative character of our Congress. Most of those who have found admission as representatives are members of this Congress. (*Cheers.*) In the Viceroy's Council

we have the Hon. Mr. Pherozshah M. Mehta (*applause*), the Hon. the Maharajah of Durbhanga, and the Hon. Mr. G. M. Chitnavis, and in the Provincial Councils, the Hon. Messrs. W. C. Bonnerji, Surendranath Bannerjee, Lal Mohun Ghose, Maharajah Jagadindranath Roy (of Bengal), the Hon. Messrs. Rangia Naidu, Kalyansundram Iyer, Vashyan Iynger (of Madras), Hon. Messrs. P. M. Mehta, Chimanlal H. Setalvad, and Vishnu Raghunath Natu (of Bombay), and the Hon. Rajah Rampal Singh and the Hon. Charu Chunder Mitter (of Allahabad). In the late Hon. Mir Humayun Jah, C.I.E., of Madras, we have lost one of our most distinguished representatives and staunch supporters.

It has also proved to us the gratifying and encouraging feature that the electors have made no differences of creed, but have voted on the only right principle of fitness and of common Indian nationality and welfare. (*Hear, hear.*)

The fact is, and it stands to reason, that the thinking portion and the educated, whether in English or in their own learning, of all classes and creeds, in their common nationality as Indians, are naturally becoming the leaders of the people. Those Indians, specially, who have received a good English education, have the double advantage of knowing their own countrymen as well as understanding and appreciating the merits of British men and British rule, with the result, as Sir Bartle Frere has well put it: "And now wherever I go I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government, and the most able co-adjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India, among the ranks of the educated natives." (*Applause.*)

Or as the Government of India has said: "To the minds of at least the educated among the people of India—and the number is rapidly increasing—any idea of the subversion of the British power is abhorrent." (*Hear, hear.*)

And as Lord Dufferin, as Viceroy of India, has said in his Jubilee speech: "We are surrounded on all sides by native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence, from whose hearty, loyal and honest co-operation we may hope to derive the greatest benefit." (*Applause.*)

It would be the height of unwisdom, after themselves creating this great new force, "which is rapidly increasing" as "the best exponents and co-adjutors," as "abhorring the subversion of the British power," and from whose "hearty, loyal and honest co-operation the greatest benefit can arise," that the ruling authorities should drive the force into opposition instead of drawing it to their own side by taking it into confidence and thereby strengthening their own foundation. This Congress represents the Aristocracy of intellect and the New Political Life, created by themselves, which is at present deeply grateful to its Creator. Common sense tells you—have it with you, instead of against you.

With regard to your other most important Resolution, to hold examinations simultaneously both in India and England for all the Civil Services, it would not have become a practical fact by the Resolution of the House of Commons of 2nd June last, had it not been to a large extent for your persevering but constitutional demand for it, made with moderation during all the years of your existence. (*Applause.*) I am glad that in the last Budget debate the Under-Secretary of State for India has given us this assurance.

"It may be in the recollection of the House that, in my official capacity, it was my duty earlier in the Session to oppose a Resolution in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, but the House of Commons thought differently from the Government. That once done, I need hardly say that there is no disposition on the part of the Secretary of State for India or myself to attempt to thwart or defeat the effect of the vote of the House of Commons on that resolution." (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

We all cannot but feel thankful to the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, and the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. George Russell, for the satisfactory assurance.

I may just remark here in passing that I am not able to understand why the higher Civil and Educational Medical Services are handed over to Military Medical Officers, instead of there being a separate Civil Medical Service, dealt with by Simultaneous Examinations in India and England, as we expect to have for the other Civil Services. I also may ask why some higher Civil Engineering posts are given to Military Engineers.

One thing more I may say: Your efforts have succeeded not only in creating an interest in Indian affairs, but also a desire among the people of the United Kingdom to promote our true welfare. (*Hear, hear.*) Had you achieved in the course of the past eight years only this much and no more, you would have amply justified your existence. (*Cheers.*) You have proved two things—that you are moderate and reasonable in what you ask, and that the British people are willing to grant what is shown to be reasonable.

It is not necessary for me to enlarge upon the subject of your justification further than this, that all the Resolutions you have formulated have more or less advanced; that they are receiving attentive consideration is testified by the continuous discussions that have been going on in the press and on the platform both here and in England. In England itself many a cause, great or small, has to agitate long before making an impression. What struggles have there been in Parliament itself and out of Parliament for the Corn Laws, Slavery Laws, Factory Laws, Parliamentary Reforms, and many others, in short, in every important legislation? We must keep courage, persevere, and "never say die." (*Loud applause.*)

One more result, though not the least, of your labours I shall briefly touch upon. The effect which your labours produced on the minds of the people of the United Kingdom has helped largely an Indian to find his way into the Great Imperial Parliament, and in confirmation of this, I need not go further than remind you of the generous action of Central Finsbury and the words of the Resolution of the Council of its United Liberal and Radical Association which I have already placed before you. (*Applause.*)

As you are all aware, though it was long my wish, my friend the Hon. Mr. Lal Mohun Ghose made the first attempt, and twice contested Deptford, with no little chances of success, but adverse circumstances proved too strong for him. We owe a debt of gratitude to Deptford, and also to Holborn, which gave me the first lift, and in my contest there, though a forlorn hope, the Liberal electors exerted their utmost, and gave me a very satisfactory poll. (*Cheers.*)

My mind also turns to those good friends of



India—Bright, Fawcett, Bradlaugh and others (*applause*)—who pioneered for us, prepared for the coming of this result, and helped us when we were helpless.

This naturally would make you desire and lead me to say a few words about the character of the reception given to the Indian Member in the House of Commons. It was everything that could be desired. (*Cheers.*) The welcome was general from all sides, as the interest in Indian affairs has been much increasing, and there is a desire to do justice to India. (*Renewed cheering.*) Mr. Gladstone on two occasions not only expressed his satisfaction to me at finding an Indian in the House, but expressed also a strong wish to see several more.

The attendance on Indian questions has been good, and, what is still better, the interest in the Indian debates has been earnest and with a desire to understand and judge rightly. India has, indeed, fared well this Session, notwithstanding its other unprecedentedly heavy work.

Thankful as we are to many Members of all sides, I am bound to express our special thanks to the Irish Labour and Radical Members. (*Loud cheers.*) I heard from Mr. Davitt, two days before my departure, "Don't forget to tell your colleagues at the Congress that every one of Ireland's Home Rule Members in Parliamant is at your back in the cause of the Indian people." (*Prolonged cheering.*) All our friends who had been working for us before are not only as zealous and staunch as ever, but more active and earnest. I cannot do better than to record in this place with thankfulness the names of all those Members from all parties who voted for the Resolution of 2nd June last

in favour of Simultaneous Examinations in England and India for all the Indian Civil Services.

As the ballot fell to Mr. Herbert Paul (*three cheers for Mr. Paul*), he, as you are aware, moved the Resolution, and you know also how well and ably he advocated the cause, and has ever since kept up a watchful interest in and eye on it. I may mention here that I had sent a whip or notice to every Member of the House of Commons for this debate.

*2nd June, 1893.*

11h. 55m.

B. M.

No. 111.

Supply,—Order for Committee read;

Motion made, and question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair":—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the question, in order to add the words "all open Competitive Examinations heretofore held in England alone for appointments to the Civil Services of India shall henceforth be held simultaneously both in India and England, such Examinations in both countries being identical in their nature, and all who compete being finally classified in one list according to merit:—

(*Mr. Paul*)—

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question":—

The House *divided*; Ayes 76, Noes 84.

I may say here a few words about the progress we are making in our Parliamentary position. By the exertions of Sir William Wedderburn (*applause*), Mr. Caine (*applause*), and other friends, an Indian Parliamentary Committee has been formed, of which

Sir William Wedderburn is the Chairman and Mr. Herbert Roberts is the Secretary. (*Applause.*) The Committee is not yet fully formed. It will, we hope, be a larger General Committee of our supporters, with a small Executive Committee, like other similar Committees that exist in the House for other causes. I give the names of the Members now fully enrolled in this Committee:—

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Mr. Jacob Bright      | Mr. H. Paul       |
| „ Caine               | Sir Joseph Pease  |
| „ John E. Ellis       | Mr. T. H. Roberts |
| Dr. W. A. Hunter      | „ R. T. Reid      |
| Mr. Illingworth       | „ Samuel Smith    |
| Sir Wilfred Lawson    | „ C. E. Schwann   |
| Mr. Walter B. McLaren | „ Eugene Wason    |
| „ Swift MacNeill      | „ Webb            |
| „ Dadabhai Naoroji    | Sir W. Wedderburn |

Besides these, there are a large number of Members (exclusive of the 70 or 80 Irish Members already referred to) whom we count as supporters and hope to see fully enrolled Members on our Indian Parliamentary Committee before long.

On the eve of my departure the Committee invited me to a private dinner at the House, and gave me a hearty God-speed and wishes of success, with an expression of their earnest desire to see justice done to India. (*Applause.*)

Before leaving this subject of Parliament, let me offer to Mr. George Russell, the Under-Secretary of State for India, my sincere thanks for his sympathetic and cordial treatment of me in all I had to do with him, and for his personal good feeling and kindness towards me. (*Applause.*)

With all that has been done by the Congress, we have only begun our work. We have yet much, and

very much more work to do till that political, moral and material condition is attained by us which will raise us really to the level of our British fellow-citizens in prosperity and political elevation, and thereby consolidate the British power on the imperishable foundation of justice, mutual benefit and the contentment and loyalty of the people.

The reason why I have dwelt upon our past life is that it shows that our future is promising and hopeful, that our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fairplay of the people of the United Kingdom is not misplaced, and that if we are true to ourselves and learn from the British character the self-sacrifice and perseverance which the British so largely possess, we need never despair of obtaining every justice and reform which we may reasonably claim as our birth-rights as British citizens. (*Cheers.*)

What, then, is to be our future work? We have yet to surmount much prejudice, prepossessions, and misapprehension of our true material and political condition. But our course is clear and straight before us. On the one hand, we need not despair or quarrel with those who are against us; we should, on the other hand, go on steadily, perseveringly, and moderately with the representation of our grievances and just rights.

In connection with the question of our Legislative Councils we have yet very much work before us. Not only are the present rules unsatisfactory even for the fulfilment of the present Act itself as interpreted in the House by Mr. Gladstone, not only have we yet to obtain the full "living representation" of the people of India in these Councils, but also much further extension of their present extremely restricted

powers which render the Councils almost a mere name. By the Act of 1861 (19), without the permission of the Governor-General no member can introduce any measure (which virtually amounts to exclusion) about matters affecting the public debt or public revenues, or for imposing any charge on such revenue, or the discipline and maintenance of any part of Her Majesty's Military or Naval forces. This means that, as far as the spending of our money is concerned, the Legislative Council is simply as if it did not exist at all. (*Cries of "Shame, shame."*) No motion can be made by any member unless such motion be for leave to introduce some measure or have reference to some measure actually introduced thereunto. Thus there is no opportunity of calling any Department or Government to account for their acts (sec. 52). All things which shall be done by the Secretary of State shall have the same force and validity as if this Act (1861) had not been passed. Here is full arbitrary power. By the Act (1892, sec. 52) no member shall have power to submit or propose any resolution or to divide the Council in respect of any such financial discussion, or the answer to any question asked under the authority of this Act, or the rules made under this Act. Such is the poor character of the extent of concession made to discuss finances or to put questions. Rules made under this Act (1892) shall not be subject to alteration or amendment at meetings for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations. Also (Act 1861, sec. 22) the Secretary of State for India can by an Act of Parliament raise any money in the United Kingdom for the Government of India, and thus pile up any amount of burden on the Indian tax-payer, without his having a word

to say upon it. We are, to all intents and purposes, under an arbitrary rule, and are just only about at the threshold of a true Legislative Council.

Amongst the most important work of the Councils is the Budget. What is the condition of the Budget debate both here and in England? The House of Commons devotes week after week for supply of the English Budget, when every item of expenditure is discussed or may be altered; and not only that, but the conduct of the department during the year is brought under review, which becomes an important check to any arbitrary, unjust or illegal action. But what is the Indian Budget debate or procedure? Here the Financial Statement is made by the Finance Minister. Then a week or so after a few speeches are made to no practical effect, no practical motion or resolution, and the whole thing is over. (*"Shame."*) Somewhat similar is the fate of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, with the advantage of proposing any amendments, and, at least, of having one amendment with practical effect of a division or vote. But there is also the important advantage of bringing in any Indian measure or motion in the course of the Session in accordance with the rules and orders of the House like any other measure or motion. I felt thankful that at the last Budget debate, though there was the usual additional agony of the last day of the Session, yet there was not also the agony of scanty attendance, thanks to the increasing interest in the House in Indian matters and to the friends of India. (*Applause.*) In both places no practical check on any waste, extravagant or unnecessary expenditure. I am not at present discussing the merits of such Councils and restriction of powers, but that

such matters will require your attention and consideration, that even in this one matter of Legislative Councils you have yet to secure Mr. Gladstone's "real living representative voice of the people" being heard upon every detail of the Government of British India. (*Hear, hear.*)

There is, however, another important matter—I mean the direct representation from India in the Imperial Parliament. (*Applause.*) As all our Imperial questions and relations between India and the United Kingdom, all amendments of Parliamentary Acts already passed and existing, or all important Acts that may be and can be only passed hereafter in Parliament, and all our ultimate appeals can be settled in Parliament alone, it is of extreme importance that there should be some reasonable direct representation from India in the House of Commons, and the representatives may be Indians or Europeans, as long as they are the choice directly of Indian Constituencies, just as you have delegates to this Congress of Indians or Europeans.

Central Finsbury has been generous to us; other constituencies may also extend to us such generous considerations and help, but it is not fair that we should be left to depend upon the generosity of English Constituencies. (*Hear, hear.*) Under present circumstances we have a right to have direct representation. I hope the time is not very distant when we may successfully appeal to Parliament to grant us the true status of British political citizenship. (*Cheers.*) I do not overlook that several matters will have to be considered, and I am not at present placing before you a cut-and-dry scheme. My only object is to draw your attention to this vital subject.

But the greatest question before you, the question of all questions, is the poverty of India. (*Hear, hear.*) This will be, I am much afraid, the great future trouble, both of the Indian people and of the British rulers. It is the rock ahead. In this matter we are labouring under one great disadvantage. This poverty we attribute to the system, and not to the officials who administer that system. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) But, unfortunately for us, for themselves and the British people, the officials (with clear-sighted exceptions of course) make the matter personal, and do not consider impartially and with calmness of judgment this all-important subject. The present Duke of Devonshire has well put this state of the official mind, which is peculiarly applicable in connection with this subject. He said: "The Anglo-Indian, whatever may be his merits, and no doubt they are just, is not a person who is distinguished by an exceptionally calm judgment.

Mr. Gladstone also lately, in the Opium debate, remarked:—"That it was a sad thing to say, but unquestionably it happens not infrequently in human affairs, that those who ought from their situation to know the most and the best, yet from prejudice and prepossessions knew the least and the worst." (*Hear, hear.*)

This has been our misfortune with officials. But there have been and are some thoughtful officials who know the truth, like Lord Lawrence and others in the past, and in the present times like the latest Finance Ministers, Lord Cromer, Sir Auckland Colvin, and Sir David Barbour, who have perceived and stated the terrible truth that British India is extremely poor. Among other officials, several have testified to the



sad fact, in "Confidential Reports," which Government do not publish—and this after a hundred years of the work of these officials under the present unnatural system. The system being unnatural, were the officials the very angels themselves, or as many Gladstones, they cannot prevent the evils of the system and cannot do much good. When Mr. Bayley and I moved for a Royal Commission of Inquiry, it was said that I had not produced evidence of poverty. It was not so; but it is difficult to make those see who would not see. (*Laughter and applause.*) To every member of the House I had previously sent my papers of all necessary evidence on the annual income and absolute wants of the people of India. I do not know whether any of those who opposed us had taken the trouble to read this, and it was unfair to expect that in making out a *prima facie* case for our motion, I should reiterate, with the unnecessary waste of some hours of the precious time of the House, all the evidence already in their hands.

You remember my papers on the Poverty of India, and I have asked for returns to bring up information to date, so that a fair comparison of the present with the past may enable the House to come to a correct judgment. I am sorry the Government of India refuses to make a return of a Note prepared so late as 1881 by Sir David Barbour, upon which the then Finance Minister (Lord Cromer) based his statement in his speech in 1882 about the extreme poverty of the mass of the people. I do not see why the Government of India should refuse. The Note, I am told, is an important document. Government for its own sake should be ready to give it. In 1880, the present Duke of Devonshire, then Secretary of State

for India, readily gave me some statistics and information prepared by Mr. F. Danvers, though I did not know of their existence. This enabled me to point out some errors and to explain some points which had been misunderstood. Such information is extremely necessary, not merely for the sake of the exceedingly poor masses of the people, but for the very stability of the British power itself.

The question of the poverty of India should be fully raised, grappled with and settled. The Government ought to deal boldly and broadly with it. Let there be a return in detail, correctly calculated, made every year of the *total* annual income of *all* British India, per head of population, and of the requirements of a labourer to live in working health, and not as a starved beast of burden. Unless such complete and accurate information is given every year in detail, it is idle and useless to make mere unfounded assertions that India is prospering.

It must also be remembered that Lord Cromer's annual average of not more than Rs. 27 per head is for the whole population, including the rich and all classes, and not what the great mass of the population can or do actually get. Out of the total annual income of British India all that portion must be deducted which belongs to European planters, manufacturers, and mine-owners, and not to the people of British India, excepting the poor wages they receive, to drudge to give away their own country's wealth to the benefit of a foreign people. Another portion is enjoyed in and carried out from the country on a far larger share per head by many who are not the children of the soil—official and non-official. Then the upper and middle classes of the Indians themselves

receive much more than their average share. The great mass of the poor people, therefore, have a much lower average than even the wretched "not more than Rs. 27" per head.

You know that I had calculated the average of the income as being Rs. 20 per head per annum, and when Lord Cromer's statement of Rs. 27 appeared, I requested him to give me his calculations but he refused. However, Rs. 20 or "not more than Rs. 27"—how wretched is the condition of a country of such income, after a hundred years of the most costly administration, and can such a thing last? (*Cries of "No, no."*)

It is remarkable that there is no phase of the Indian problem which clear-headed and fair-minded Anglo-Indians have not already seen and indicated. More than a hundred years ago, in 1787, Sir John Shore wrote these remarkable, far-seeing and prophetic words:—

"Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the State, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it (supposing the demand to be enhanced), there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counter-balanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion."

And these words of prophecy are true to the present day. I pass over what has been said by other European officials at different times during the hundred years. I come to 1886, and here is a curious and complete response after a hundred years by the Secretary of State for India. In a despatch (26th January, 1886) to the Treasury, he makes a significant admission about the consequences of the

character of the Government of the foreign rule of Britain. He says:—

“The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change, which is more especially exhibited to new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the government, which is in the hands of foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army. The imposition of new taxation which would have to be borne wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of the country would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of or concern in the Government of India, but which those responsible for that government have long regarded as of the most serious order.”

What a strange confirmation, fulfilment and explanation of the very reason of the prophecy of a hundred years ago, and admission *now* that because the character of the present government is such that “*it is in the hands of the foreigners who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the army,*” the consequence of it is a “*political danger,*” the real magnitude of which is “*of the most serious order.*”

Need I, after this declaration even, despair that some of our Anglo-Indian friends would not take a lesson from the Secretary of State and understand the evil of the system under which India is suffering? Have I ever said anything clearer or stronger than

this despatch has done? It gives my whole fear of the future perils to the people of India, and political danger to the British power, in a nutshell. This shows that some of our Anglo-Indian authorities have not been, nor are, so dull and blind as not to have seen before or see now the whole peril of the position, and the unnatural and suicidal system of administration.

Yes, figures are quoted by some, of what they call "increase of trade," "balance of trade in favour of India," "increase of industry," "hoarding of treasure in British India," etc., etc.; but our misfortune is that these people, with bias and prejudices and prepossessions, and apparently having not very clear ideas of the principles, processes, and details of commercial and banking operations and transactions, and of the perturbations of what Sir John Shore called "the evils of a distant foreign dominion," are not able to understand and read aright these facts and figures of the commercial and economic conditions of British India. These people do not realize or seem to understand that what are called "the trade returns of British India" are misleading, and are *not* the trade returns of *British India*. A good portion of both the imports and exports of both merchandise and treasure belong to the Native States and to countries beyond the borders, and not to British India. A separate return must be made of the imports and exports of the non-British territories, so that a correct account of the true trade of British India may be given by itself—and then there should be some statement of the exports which are not trade exports at all, but only political and private European remittances, and then only will it be seen how wretched this British Indian true

trade is, and how fallacious and misleading the present returns are. A return is made every year, called "The Material and Moral Progress of India." But that part regarding "Material Progress" to which I am confining my observations is very imperfect and misleading. As I have already said, nothing short of a return every year of the average annual income per head of population of British India, and of the absolute necessities of life for a healthy labourer, in detailed calculation, can give any correct idea of the progress or otherwise of the material condition of the people of British India. I ask for "detailed calculation" in the returns, because some of the officials seem to have rather vague notions of the Arithmetic of Averages, and though the foundation figures may be correct, they bring out results far from truth. I have pointed out this with instances in my papers. I have communicated with the Secretary of State for India, and he has communicated with the Governments in India, but I do not know how far this correction has been attended to by those who calculate averages.

What is grievous is that the present unnatural system, as predicted by Sir John Shore, is destructive to us, with a partial benefit to the United Kingdom, with our curse upon it. But were a natural system to prevail, the commercial and industrial benefits, aided by perfect free trade that exists between India and the United Kingdom, will be to both countries of an extent of which we can at present form no conception. Englishmen hanker after new markets. But here is an inexhaustible market of 221,000,000 of their own civilized fellow-citizens, with some 66,000,000 more of the people of the Native States, and what a great trade would arise with such an

enormous market, and the United Kingdom would not for a long time hear any thing about her "unemployed." It is only some people of the United Kingdom of the higher classes that at present draw all the benefit from India. The great mass of the people do not derive that benefit from the connection with India which they ought to get with benefit to both countries. On the other hand, it is with the Native States that there is some comparatively decent trade. With British India, as compared with its population, the trade of the United Kingdom is wretched indeed after a century of a very costly administration paid for by the poverty-stricken ryots.

Truly has Macaulay said emphatically: "To trade with civilized man is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages; that would, indeed, be a doting wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency which would keep a hundred millions (now really 221,000,000) of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves." Should this doting wisdom continue?

It is impossible for me to explain in this address all the misapprehensions. I have already explained my views as fully as possible in my papers. These views were at first ridiculed and pooh-poohed till the highest financial authorities, the latest Finance Ministers themselves, admitted the extreme poverty of India. Lord Cromer summed up the situation in these remarkable words in 1882: "It has been calculated that the average income per head of population in India is not more than Rs. 27 a year." "In England the average income per year per head of population was £33; in France it was £23; in Turkey,

which was the poorest country in Europe, it was £4 a head." Comment is unnecessary. Let us and the Government not live in a fool's paradise, or time may bring disasters to both when it is too late to stop them. This poverty is the greatest danger both to us and the rulers. In what shapes and varieties of forms the disease of poverty may attack the body-politic and bring out and aggravate other evils it is difficult to tell or foresee, but that there is danger of "most serious order," as the Secretary of State declares, nobody can deny.

Were the people of British India allowed to enjoy the fruits of their own labour and resources, and were fair relations established between the British and Indian peoples, with India contented and prosperous, Britain may defy half a dozen Russias. (*Loud cheers.*) Indians will then fight to the last man and to the last rupee for their share as patriots and not as mercenaries. The rulers will have only to stamp their foot, and millions will spring up to defend the British power and their own hearths and homes. (*Renewed cheering.*)

We, the Congress, are only desirous of supporting Government, and having this important matter of poverty grappled with and settled, we are anxious to prevent "the political danger" of the "most serious order," declared to exist by the Secretary of State himself. We desire that the British connection should endure, for a long time to come, for the sake of our material and political elevation among the civilized nations of the world. It is no pleasure or profit to us to complain unnecessarily or wantonly about this poverty.

Were we enemies of British rule, our best course



would be, not to cry out, but remain silent, and let the mischief take its course till it ends in disaster, as it must. But we do not want that disaster, and we therefore cry out, both for our own sake and for the sake of the rulers—*This evil of poverty must be boldly faced and remedied.*

This is the question to which we shall have to devote our best energies. We have, no doubt, to contend against many difficulties, but they must be surmounted for everybody's sake.

The next subject to which I desire to draw your attention is this. We have a large costly European Army and European Civil Services. It is not to be supposed that in these remarks I accept the necessity for them. I take at present the situation as it is. I now submit to the calm consideration of the British people and Government these questions. Is all this European service entirely for the sole benefit of India? Has the United Kingdom no interest or benefit in it? Does not the greatness of, and the greatest benefit to, the United Kingdom arise from its connection with India? Should not the cost of such greatness and great benefits be shared by the United Kingdom in proportion of its means and benefit? Are not these European services especially imposed upon us on the clearly admitted and declared ground of maintaining the British power? Let us see what our rulers themselves say.

Lord Beaconsfield said:—

“We had to decide what was the best step to counteract the efforts Russia was then making, for, though war had not been declared, her movements had commenced in Central Asia, and the struggle has commenced which was to decide for ever which power

should possess the great gates of India, and that the real question at issue was whether England should possess the gates of her own great Empire in India, and whether the time had not arrived when we could no longer delay that the problem should be solved, and in a manner as it has been solved by Her Majesty's Government."

Again he says:—

"We resolved that the time has come when this country should acquire the complete command and possession of the gates of the Indian Empire. Let me at least believe that the Peers of England are still determined to uphold, not only the Empire, but the honour of this country."

Can any words be more emphatic to show the vast and most vital stakes, honour and interests of the United Kingdom?

Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, tells us:—

"We are resolutely determined to maintain our supremacy over our Indian Empire . . . that among other things," he says, "that supremacy rests upon the maintenance of our European Civil Service," that "we rest also upon the magnificent European force which we maintain in that country."

This, again, is another emphatic declaration of the vast stakes and interest of the United Kingdom for which the European Services are maintained entirely at our expense.

I shall give one more authority only:—

See what a man like Lord Roberts, the symbol of physical force, admits. He says to the London Chamber of Commerce: "I rejoice to learn that you recognize how indissolubly the prosperity of the

United Kingdom is bound up with the retention of that vast Eastern Empire ;" and again he says at Glasgow : " That the retention of our Eastern Empire is essential to the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom." Now, I ask again, that with all such deep, vast and great interests, and the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom essentially depending on the Eastern Empire, and indissolubly bound up with it, is it reasonable, is it just and fair, is it British that *all* the cost of such greatness, glory, and prosperity of the United Kingdom should be entirely, to the last farthing, thrown upon the wretched Indians, as if the only relations existing between the United Kingdom and India were not of mutual benefit, but of mere masters and slaves, as Macaulay pointed out to be deprecated. (*Applause and cries of "No, no."*)

As for the Navy, the *Times* regards, and it is generally admitted, that the very existence of Britain itself depends upon the command of the sea. The *Times* says: " They will never forgive the Minister or the Ministry that leaves them weaker at sea than any possible combination of France and another power."

By a telegram I read at Aden I found Mr. Gladstone " re-affirmed the necessity of British supremacy."

For any war vessels that may be stationed in India for the protection of the interests of both, the expenditure may be fairly shared.

In the Bill for the better government of Ireland there are provisions by which Ireland is required to pay a certain share of the Imperial expenditure according to its means, and, when necessary, to pay a similar share of any extraordinary expenditure, Ire-

land having all its resources at its own command. Now see how vastly different is our position. Not only will Ireland have all her internal services Irish or under Irish rules, causing no foreign drain from her, but she will also, as she has always enjoyed, continue to enjoy her share in all the gain and glory of the British Empire. Irishmen can be Viceroy, Governors, and have any of the appointments in the military or civil services of the Empire, with the additional advantage of a large number of members in Parliament. The Indians, on the other hand, have not only no such share at all in the gains and glory of the British Empire, but are excluded even from the Services of their own country, with the consequences of an exhausting foreign drain, of the deplorable evils foretold by Sir John Shore, and subjected to the imposition of every farthing of the expenditure. Nor has India any votes in Parliament. And we have now the additional misfortune that the British Cabinet, since the transfer to the Crown, is no longer the independent tribunal to judge between us and the Indian authorities, and this adds heavily to our difficulties for obtaining justice and redress, except so far as the sense of justice of the non-official members of the Parliament helps us.

There is a strange general misapprehension among the people of the United Kingdom. They do not seem to know that they have not spent a single shilling either in the formation of the British Indian Empire or in its maintenance, and that, as far as I know, every farthing is taken from the Indians, with the only exception, in my knowledge, that Mr. Gladstone, with his sense of justice, allowed £5,000,000 towards the last Afghan War, which, without having

any voice in it, cost India £21,000,000. (*Loud cries of "Shame."*) I cannot blame the people of the United Kingdom generally for this mistake, when even well-informed papers give utterances to this most unfortunate fallacy. As, for instance, a paper like the *Statist*, in the extract which my friend Mr. Dinshaw E. Wacha gave you last year, says: "Whatever may happen, we must defend India to our last shilling and our last man," while the fact is that they have not spent even their first shilling or any shilling at all (*laughter*), but, on the contrary, derived benefits in various ways from India of millions on millions every year. (*"Shame."*) Nor have the fighters in creating and maintaining the British Indian Empire been only the British soldiers to "the last man." Indian soldiers have done the main work, and if India can be made prosperous and contented as it can be by true statesmanship, the Indian soldier will be ready to fight to "the last man" to defend British power. (*Loud cheers.*)

Britain in fact cannot send to India "to its last man." The very idea is absurd; on the contrary she can draw from India for her European purpose an inexhaustible strength.

Again the *Statist* says:—"We are at this moment spending large sums of money in preparing against a Russian attack." Not a farthing of the British money? Every farthing of these "large sums," and which are crushing us, is "imposed" upon the people of British India. Such misleading statements are often made in the English press to our great injury. (*"Shame."*)

I repeat, then, that we must submit to the just consideration of the British people and Parliament,

whether it is just and right that they should not pay a fair share, according to their stakes and means, towards all such expenditure as is incurred for the benefit of both India and the United Kingdom, such expenditure, and the respective share of each, being settled on a peace footing, any extraordinary expenditure against any foreign invasion being also further fairly shared.

Before closing this subject, I may just remark that, while leaving necessarily the highest offices of power and control, such as Viceroys and Governors to Europeans, I regard the enormous European Services as a great political and imperial weakness, in critical political times to the British power, as well as the cause, as the present Duke of Devonshire pointed out, of the insufficiency of an efficient administration of the country; and also the main cause of the evils foretold by Sir John Shore, and admitted by the Secretary of State for India, after a hundred years, as a political danger of "a most serious order," and of the poverty of India.

I would not say much upon the next subject, as you have had only lately the highest testimonies of two Viceroys and three Secretaries of State for India—of Lord Northbrook and Lord Ripon, and of the Duke of Argyll, Lord Cross, and Lord Kimberley. You remember the debate raised by Lord Northbrook in the House of Lords a few months ago that the Home Military Charges were unfair and unjust, and all the authorities I have named endorsed the complaint. But even the heads of the Indian authorities are so much in terror of the Treasury that Lord Kimberley said: "The India Office has no particular desire that the question should be

re-opened and discussed anew, for bitter experience has taught the department that the re-opening of a question of this kind generally results in the imposition of additional charges." Is this one other disadvantage of the transfer to the Crown? Lord Kimberley hit the nail on the head why India was so unfairly treated (and the same may be applied to such other treatment of India by the Indian authorities themselves) when he said: "The reasons why proposals that must throw fresh burdens on the Government of India are so frequently made in the House of Commons is that those who make them know that their own pockets will not suffer in the desire to make things agreeable and comfortable. (*Laughter.*) The tax-payers of the country exercise no check upon such proposals, and the consequence is that charges are sometimes imposed upon the Government of India which that Government thinks unjust and unnecessary." It must be borne in mind that charges "imposed on the Government of India" means the suffering party is the poor tax-payer of India.

The Duke of Argyll characterizes these charges as "unjust and illegal tribute to England." But mark the words of Lord Cross: "I am certain that in the course of a few years the Indian people will force us to do them justice." This is just the feature "to be forced to do justice" which I always deplore. We desire that all necessary reforms and acts of justice should be spontaneous on the part of Britain, in good grace and in good time, as gifts claiming our gratitude, and not to wait till "*forced,*" with loss of grace from the giver and the loss of gratitude from the receiver. (*Hear, hear.*)

I offer my thanks to Lord Northbrook and other

Lords for that debate, though yet barren of any result. But we may fairly hope that such debate must sooner or later produce good results. It is like a good seed sown and will fructify.

Here are some smaller items : The cost of the India Office Building of about half a million, of the Royal Engineering College of £134,000, and of other buildings is all cast on India. The cost of the Colonial Office Building, £100,000, is paid from the British Exchequer. The India Office Establishment, etc., about £230,000 a year, is all imposed on India, while the £41,000 of the Colonial Office and £168,000 for Colonial Services are paid from the British Exchequer. The Public Debt of India (excluding Railway and Productive Works) is incurred in creating and preserving the British power, but all our cries to give us at least the benefit of a British guarantee have been in vain, with the curious suicidal effort of showing to the world that the British Government itself has no confidence in the stability of its own power in India. (*Hear, hear.*)

In 1870 Mr. Gladstone declared India to be "too much burdened," when the Annual Expenditure was £39,000,000; and what expression can be used now, when, with an extremely poor income, the burden now is nearly 75 per cent. heavier, or Rx. 68,000,000 this year.

Passing on to other subjects, I hope the separation of Executive and Judicial functions will receive attention as its necessity has been recognised. We have to persevere for this as well as for other parts of our programme, bearing in mind one great difficulty we have to contend with. Unfortunately the Indian authorities, when they determine to do or not to do a



thing under the notion of preserving prestige and strength, as if any false prestige can be a strength, disregard even Resolutions or Acts of Parliament itself, and resort to every device to carry their own point or view. (*Loud cries of "Shame."*) We cannot expect Parliament to watch Indian affairs from day to day, and therein lies the impunity and immunity of the Indian Administration.

I shall refer to only two instances: First, the case of the misleadingly called "The Statutory Service," and what in reality was created out of, and as a part and parcel of, the Covenanted Civil Service. I can speak with some authority, for I was the very proposer of the Memorial of the East India Association to Sir Stafford Northcote which resulted in the Clause of the Act of 1870. But the Indian authorities would not have it. They moved heaven and earth to thwart it; it is a long and a sad story for the good name of Britain, and they never rested till they made the Statute a dead letter, though it still stands on the Statute Book of the Imperial Parliament. (*"Shame."*) However, I hear with pleasure, and I hope it is true, that a disposition has arisen, for which I understand Lord Kimberley is to be thanked, to redress this glaring and unfortunate wrong—unfortunate for British prestige, for British honour and British good faith, and I do hope that the Government would do this redress ungrudgingly, with good grace, completeness and generosity. This instance illustrates another unfortunate phase of the Administration.

The Forest Department is recruited by examinations in England and by selection in India. Such selection is not based upon a Resolution or Act of Parliament, but upon the will of the authorities and

consisting of Europeans. The Government of India in Resolution No. 18F, of 29th July, 1891, have described them as untrained and uncovenanted officers, who have been unconditionally appointed in past years, and yet they are ordered in the regular Indian Forest Service; while those Native Civilians, created and backed by an Act of Parliament as distinctly belonging to the Covenanted Civil Service, are excluded from that Civil Service to which the Act distinctly appointed them. Can such difference of treatment of Europeans and Indians preserve British prestige for honour and justice, and would it increase or diminish the existing attachment of the Indians to British rule?

The second instance was the practical disregard of the Resolution of the House of Commons about the State regulation of vice. But in this case there were vigilant watchers like Mrs. Butler, Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., Mr. Stuart, M.P., and others, and they did not allow the Resolution to become a dead letter. In this case also I am glad to find that the Indian authorities now mean to give loyal effect to the Resolution, and well may they do so for the sake of the British good name, fame, and prestige for morality of every kind upon which mainly British strength and influence rest.

On the Currency Question I need not dwell much. My views are known to you. Now that the Sherman Law is repealed by the United States, we may hope to see a settled condition in time. No amount of currency jugglery or devices in this country could have any influence (except that of creating troubles in the country itself, as has happened) on the loss in the remittances to England for Home Charges, which must be paid in gold, and will fluctuate with the rise or fall of gold in the United Kingdom. As if this

crushing loss was not enough for the wretched tax-payers, further burdens were laid to make things agreeable and comfortable with other people's money, as Lord Kimberley would say, of high exchange to the European officials, and the further most unwarranted payment of £138,000 to the banks, with whose transactions in profits or loss the tax-payer has no connection whatever. (*"Shame, shame."*) Some strange precedents are made in this matter to silence opposition and to support banks at the expense of the tax-payers, which will lead to serious troubles in the future. Should not the mill-owners and other concerns also claim compensation for the dislocation of their industry or transactions by the currency action of the Government, as Government itself admits to have caused such dislocation? Would the British Exchequer have paid any such money to the British banks? Such a thing would never have been thought of. The utmost that is done in any crisis is allowing the Bank of England to issue more notes under strong restrictions. Had the banks made profits instead of loss, would they have handed them to the tax-payer? Then it would have been called the reward of shrewdness, foresight, enterprise, etc., etc.

The whole currency troubles from which India is suffering, and which are so peculiar to India and so deplorable to the Indian tax-payer, and from which no other silver-using country suffers, is one of the best illustrations, and object lessons, and proof of the soundness of Sir John Shore's prophecy about the evil consequences of the present unnatural system of a remote foreign dominion or as the Secretary of State called, the danger of "a most serious order."

The currency muddle will necessitate new taxa-

tion. The usual easy and unchecked resource of putting off the evil day by borrowing is already resorted to, and in the spirit of keeping things agreeable and comfortable to those who have votes in Parliament, there is danger of increase in the salt tax. I do hope that Government will have some moral courage and some mercy upon the wretched tax-payer, and reduce even the salt tax by re-imposing the cotton duties. Not that by this means India will be saved a pie from the addition of burdens, but that a little better able shoulders will have to bear them, or, as Lord Salisbury once coolly put it, that as India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where there was at least sufficient blood, not to those which are already feeble from the want of it.

Another subject of our future work to which I need only touch now is the relations of the Government with the Native States. There is much unnecessary irritation and dissatisfaction where there ought to be the pleasantest harmony, with much greater devoted loyalty than what even now really exists. And it is also a great mistake for a foreign power not to draw the military capacity and spirit of the country to their own side by giving it a fair career and interest in their own service. Make the military races feel it to their advantage and interest to be loyal to the British rule instead of keeping them alienated from the Government.

I need not say more upon our future work, as various Resolutions of importance will be placed before you for your consideration, and I am sure you will deliberate with that moderation and fairness for which you have already distinguished yourselves and acquired just credit, and for which I offer you my

hearty congratulations. You recognize, I have no doubt, that at every turn you have yet serious questions to grapple with and much work to do.

Anyone who has watched my public career must have seen that my main underlying principle and the desire of my heart is to promote, as far as I can, good fellow-feeling among all my countrymen. (*Loud applause.*) And I have no doubt that all the educated and thinking men and all true friends of our own country will continue to do all that lies in their power to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality, fellow-feeling, and due deference to each other's views and feelings amongst the whole people of our country.

Government must be firm and just in case of any unfortunate differences ; as far as Government are concerned, their duty is clearly to put down with a strong hand any lawlessness or disturbance of the peace, no matter who the parties concerned may be. They can only stand, as they ought, on the only sure and right foundation of even-handed justice to all, and cannot allow anyone to take the law into his own hands ; the only wise policy is to adhere to their declared policy of strict neutrality and equal protection and justice to all creeds. (*Hear, hear.*)

I was much pleased to read in the papers that cordial conferences had been held between Mahomedans and Hindus in various places to devise means to prevent any deplorable occurrences happening in the future.

Looking back to the past as my own personal experience of my life, and as far back as I know of earlier days, at least on my side of India, I feel a congratulation that all associations and societies of members of

all creeds have worked together in harmony and union, without any consideration of class or creed, in all matters concerning our common national public and political interests. No doubt, latterly, even in such common matters, differences of views have arisen and will arise, but such differences of views, when genuine, are healthy, just as is the case in the United Kingdom itself with its two political parties. (*Hear, hear.*)

What makes me still more gratified and look forward hopefully in the future is that our Congress has not only worked so far in the union and concord of all classes and creeds, but has taken care to provide that such harmony should continue in the future. As early as in the Congress at Allahabad of 1888 you passed this Resolution (XIII.) :—

“ That no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subject Committee, or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mahomedan delegates as a body object unanimously or nearly unanimously ; and that if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Mahomedan delegates as a body are unanimously or nearly unanimously opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped : provided that this rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion.”

As I have already said, the highest wish of my heart is that all the people of India should regard and treat each other as fellow-countrymen, with fellow-feeling for the good of all. (*Applause.*)

We may, I am convinced, rest fully assured that whatever political or national benefit we may acquire will in one or other way benefit all classes (*hear, hear*), the benefit of each taking various forms. The interests of us all are the same. We are all in the same boat. We must sink or swim together. Government cannot but treat us all alike. It is unreasonable for us to expect from them, and unjust and unwise for them to show, any undue favour to any particular class or community. The only solid foundation for them is justice and impartiality, and the only just demand from us also can only be justice and impartiality. (*Loud applause.*)

If the country is prosperous, then if one gets scope in one walk of life, another will have in another walk of life. As our Indian saying goes: "If there is water in the well it will come to the cistern." If we have the well of prosperity we shall be able to draw each our share from it. But if the well is dry we must all go without any at all.

A word for the basis upon which the strength of British power stands. Britain can hold India, or any one country can hold another, by moral force only. You can build up an empire by arms or ephemeral brute physical force, but you can preserve it by the eternal moral forces only. Brute force will, some time or other, break down; righteousness alone is everlasting. (*Cheers.*) Well and truly has Lord Ripon said, "that the British power and influence rests upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon the valour of our soldiers or the reputation of our arms." (*Applause.*) Mr. Gladstone says: "It is the predominance of that moral force for which I heartily pray in the deliberations of this House, and

the conduct of our whole public policy, for I am convinced that upon that predominance depends that which should be the first object of all our desires, as it is of all our daily official prayers, namely, that union of heart and sentiment which constitutes the truest basis of strength at home, and, therefore, both of strength and good fame throughout the civilized world." (*Applause.*)

And here is a remarkable instance cited by Mr Gladstone of a people of a different race becoming attached even to the much despised Turkish rule. How much more will the people of India, if contented and prosperous, become attached to the rule of such a people as the British? Referring to Lebanon, Mr. Gladstone said: "Owing to the wise efforts of Lord Dufferin and others, about thirty years ago, local management was established, since which the province has become contented and attached to the Turkish empire."

Lord Roberts, the apostle of British strong arm to maintain British power, and though much imbued with many of the prejudices against the progress of the Indians, as a true soldier admits without hesitation what he considers as the only solid foundation upon which British strength must for ever rest. He says: "But however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection, and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and contented India."

Truer and more statesmanlike words could not be uttered. Permit me to give one more extract. Mr. Gladstone, referring to Irish Home Rule, said: "There can be no nobler spectacle than that which we



think is now drawing upon us—the spectacle of a nation deliberately set on the removal of injustice, deliberately determined to break, not through terror and not in haste, but under the sole influence of duty and honour, determined to break with whatever remains still existing of an evil tradition, and determined in that way at once to pay a debt of justice and to consult by a bold, wise and good act its own interest and its own honour.”

Am I at all unreasonable in hoping that such noble statesmanship, honour, and good faith of the British people will, in fulness of time, also extend to India similar justice? I shall hope as long as I live.

Let us always remember that we are all children of our mother country. Indeed, I have never worked in any other spirit than that I am an Indian (*cheers*), and owe duty to my country and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu, a Mahomedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian. (*Loud cheers.*)

The question for us, especially a body like this who have received the blessings of education, is: How are we to perform our duty to our country? Certainly no one requires to be taught that no great cause or object can ever be accomplished without great sacrifices—personal and pecuniary. We can never succeed with the British people by more declamations. We must show that we believe in the justice of our cause by our earnestness and self-sacrifice. (*Hear, hear.*)

I desire now to impress upon my countrymen, with all the earnestness I am capable of, to prepare themselves for sacrifices. We observe every day what

sacrifices the British people make for attaining any object, great or small, and how persistently they stick to it; and among the lessons which we are learning from them let us learn this particular one, with the double advantage and effect of showing that Indians have public spirit and love of their country, and also proving that they are earnest in what they are asking. (*Applause.*)

Our work for the amelioration of our country and for obtaining all the rights and benefits of British citizenship will go on increasing, and it is absolutely necessary that our organization, both here and in the United Kingdom, should be much improved and made complete. Without good organization no important work can be successfully done; and that means much pecuniary and personal sacrifice. We must remember the Congress meets once a year. The General Secretaries and the Standing Committees have to carry out the details and inform the circles of the work and resolutions of the Congress.

But the most important and national work formulated by the Congress has to be done with watchfulness, day after day, in London, by your British Committee. (*Cheers.*) And, further, by your Resolution XII. of the Seventh Session, you "urged them (the Committee) to widen henceforth the sphere of their usefulness by interesting themselves, not only in those questions dealt with by the Congress, but in all Indian matters submitted to them and properly vouched for in which any principle accepted by the Congress is involved." (*Renewed cheering.*)

Fancy what this means. Why, it is another India Office! You have put all India's every day work upon the shoulders of the Committee. It becomes

exceedingly necessary for efficient and good work to have some paid person or persons to devote time to study the merits of all the representations which pour in with every mail, or by telegrams, before any action can be taken on them. It is in the United Kingdom that all our great fights are to be fought, all our national and imperial questions are to be settled, and it is to our British Committee in London that we have to look for the performance of all this responsible and arduous work, with the unfortunate feature that we have to contend against many adverse influences, prepossessions and misunderstandings. We have to make the British people unlearn a good deal.

On the other hand, we have this hopeful feature also—that we have not only many British friends, but also Anglo-Indians, who, in the true spirit of justice and of the gratitude to the country to which they owe their past career and future provision, appreciate the duty they owe to India, and are desirous to help us, and to preserve the British Empire by the only certain means of justice, the honour and righteousness of the British people, and by the contentment and prosperity of India.

You know well how much we owe to the present English members of our Committee, Sir William Wedderburn (*three cheers for Sir William Wedderburn*), Mr. Hume, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Adam, Mr. Schwann, M.P., and Mr. McLaren, M.P. If we want all such help at the fountain head of power, and without which we cannot do much good, we must take care to supply them always, promptly and accurately, all necessary sinews of war. (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

Then there is the journal "INDIA," without which our work will not be half as efficient as with it. It is

an absolute necessity as an instrument and part of the organization. Every possible effort must be made to give it the widest circulation possible both here and in the United Kingdom. I wish it could be made weekly instead of monthly.

With proper effort ten thousand copies should be easily disposed of here as a beginning, and we *must* do this.

This is the first opportunity I have of meeting you after the Congress of 1886, over which I had the honour to preside at Calcutta. Let me now thank you personally for your constant remembrance of me, for your unceasing encouragement, and for your two most kind and gratifying Resolutions passed at the last two Sessions as representatives of every class and creed, and almost wholly consisting of Hindu and Mahomedan delegates, and each delegate being elected by, and a representative of, the whole mixed community of the place he represents, on the basis of common interest and nationality. I must beg your indulgence to record those Resolutions in this address. The first Resolution (XIV.) passed by the Seventh Congress in 1891, while I was a candidate, is this:—

“Resolved that this Congress hereby puts formally on record its high esteem and deep appreciation of the great services which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has rendered, during more than a quarter of a century, to the cause of India, and it expresses its unshaken confidence in him, and its earnest hope that he may prove successful at the coming election in his candidature for Central Finsbury; and at the same time tenders, on behalf of the vast population it represents, India’s most cordial acknowledgments to all in England, whether in Central Finsbury or elsewhere,

who have aided or may aid him to win a seat in the House of Commons."

I need not say how right earnestly Central Finsbury listened to your appeal and fulfilled your hope, for which we owe them our most unstinted thanks, and to all those who helped in or out of Central Finsbury. (*Loud applause.*)

I may here once more express my hearty thanks to many ladies and gentlemen who worked hard for my election. After I was elected, you passed the second Resolution (XVI.) in the last Session. I may point here to the significant incident that in that Congress there was, I think, only one Parsi delegate, and he even not the delegate of Parsis, but of all classes of the people. This Resolution was :—

"Resolved that this Congress most respectfully and cordially tenders, on behalf of the vast population it represents, India's most heartfelt thanks to the electors of Central Finsbury for electing Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji their Member in the House of Commons; and it again puts on record its high esteem and deep appreciation of the services which that gentleman has rendered to this country, reiterates its unshaken confidence in him, and looks upon him as India's representative in the House of Commons."

Let me also now take this opportunity, on Indian soil, to tender my most heartfelt thanks for the telegrams, letters, and addresses of congratulation which I received from all parts and classes of India—literally I may say from the prince to the peasant, from members of all creeds, from Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Parsis, from Ceylon, from the High Priest of Budhists and Budhists, and other residents from the Cape, British Guiana, Australia, and, in short,

from every part of the British Empire where there were Indian residents. Ladies and gentlemen, put aside my personality and let me join in your rejoicings as an Indian in the great event in Indian annals of an Indian finding his way in the Imperial Parliament. (*Loud and prolonged cheering.*)

And, lastly, beginning from the distant Western Gate of India, where the Indian residents of Aden, of all creeds, gave me a most hearty reception; then the great portal of India, the dear old city of my birth, gave me a most magnificent welcome with its never-ceasing kindness towards me, Poona doing her best to vie with Bombay, and through Punjab so splendidly; and this series of welcome now ending in your extraordinary one which I am utterly unable to describe. Is there any reward more grand and more gratifying than the esteem, the joy with my joy, the sorrow with my sorrow, and above all the "unshaken confidence" of my fellow-countrymen and country-women of our grand, old, beloved country.

I may refer to an incident which, as it is satisfactory, is also very significant of the real desire of the British people to the justice to India. The congratulations on my election from all parts of the United Kingdom also were as hearty and warm as we could desire, and expressing satisfaction that an Indian would be able to voice the wants and aspirations of India in the House of Commons.

I can assure the Congress that, as I hope and wish, if you will pay an early visit to the United Kingdom and hold a Session there, you will obtain a kind and warm reception from its peoples. And you will, by such direct and personal appeal to the British nation, accomplish a vast amount of good. (*Hear, hear.*)

Our fate and our future are in our own hands. If we are true to ourselves and to our country, and make all the necessary sacrifices for our elevation and amelioration, I, for one, have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in the British character, and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our Gracious Sovereign, proclaimed to us in our Great Charter of the Proclamation of 1858, will be realised (*applause*), viz., "In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our best reward." And let us join in the prayer that followed this hopeful declaration of our Sovereign: "May the God of all power grant to us and to those in authority under us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people."

My last prayer and exhortation to the Congress and to all my countrymen is—Go on united and earnest, in concord and harmony, with moderation, with loyalty to the British rule and patriotism towards our country, and success is sure to attend our efforts for our just demands, and the day, I hope, is not distant when the world will see the noblest spectacle of a great nation like the British holding out the hand of true fellow-citizenship and of justice to the vast mass of humanity of this great and ancient land of India with benefits and blessings to the human race. (*Loud and prolonged cheering.*)

# THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

MR. ALFRED WEBB, M.P., PRESIDENT

OF THE

## TENTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT MADRAS ON THE 26TH DECEMBER, 1894.

### X.

*"Confident are we that through all storm and cloud the sun of constitutional liberty will yet shine with pure and beneficent effulgence upon your country. Let it be your individual care to carry back from these Congresses, into every-day life and every-day occupations, true elevation of mind, belief in your future, and your own power to mould your future. This future depends more upon yourselves than upon any political or financial changes. Before all you must cultivate a spirit of generous toleration and of charity between class and class and creed and creed."*

*"This Congress movement is the necessary and logical outcome, the richest fruit of that noble mission of which we citizens of the United Kingdom should be proud. You yourselves are taking up the work—the work which you and you alone can ultimately perfect—the eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or national prejudices amongst all lovers of your country.' This is in truth the greatest combined peaceful effort for the good of the largest number of the human race that history has recorded."*

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-SUBJECTS,—You call me to the presidency of the tenth meeting of the Indian National Congress. Thanking you for the honour, I proceed to discharge the duties of the post under a sense of its privileges and responsibilities.



The objects of these Congresses cannot be better stated than in the words of your first President:—"The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in [your] country's cause in all parts of the Empire; the eradication, by direct friendly intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or national prejudices amongst all lovers of [your] country; and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in [your] Lord Ripon's ever-memorable reign; the authoritative record after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day; the determination of the lines upon, and the methods by which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest."

The ends you have in view are similar to those of politicians in other quarters of the globe. The difficulties before you are, however, greater. Elsewhere politicians have to deal principally with homogeneous populations, to whom, at least in theory, equal political rights may at once be accorded; you have largely to work for those who have yet to pass through a long process of assimilation and elevation. All the greater necessity that in assemblages such as this you should set yourselves to the task. All the greater necessity that a deaf ear should be turned to doctrines of despair. The question is not concerning the difficulties, but whether or not the difficulties are to be faced; and if to be faced, the sooner the better. And it is alone by and through organizations such as yours that they can be faced.

It is at the same time necessary to bear in mind that you stand at the most critical period of a people's history. Your populations, heretofore supine, are awakening to consciousness and new hopes, whilst they may not fully as yet have acquired habits of self-restraint and sentiments of responsibility. Mistakes are certain to be made, and are sure to be attributed by opponents, not to their true source—former conditions—but to the awakening, the ennobling process itself. We must be prepared to meet misrepresentations and calumny. We must take heed that in our leading we give no just cause for accusation.

You have met at Bombay twice, at Calcutta twice, at Allahabad twice, at Nagpur, at Lahore; you now meet at Madras for the second time. But seventy-two representatives attended your first assembly. The numbers gradually increased to over 1,800 at Bombay, since which meeting they have, on your own motion for concentration of effectiveness, been restricted to about 1,000. Your proceedings have been conducted with dignity, fairness, courtesy, and tact.

Your Presidents hitherto have been distinguished men, mainly, as was right, from amongst your own people, and representing, as they should, some of the principal races and religions of India. Most eminent amongst these Presidents was Dadabhai Naoroji, not only because of his great abilities and his life-long services to his country, but because of the position he occupies as your only native representative in the Imperial Parliament. The electors of Finsbury have done themselves honour in returning him. As to your other native Presidents, the ability of their addresses and the manner in which they conducted your proceedings showed their fitness for the trusts

confided to them. The lamented George Yule of Calcutta, almost one of yourselves, presided at your Fourth Congress. Sir William Wedderburn conducted the fifth. I have styled Mr. Naoroji your only *native* representative in the Imperial Parliament. In Sir William Wedderburn you have another representative equally zealous and devoted—one of the faithful few whose clear conceptions of equality and justice have been unobscured by long official service. There is another name which, although not on the list of your Presidents, cannot be omitted in recalling, however slightly, your past proceedings—that of Charles Bradlaugh, “the friend and champion of India.” He attended and addressed your Fifth Congress. The report of the sixth is formally dedicated to his memory. You never lost a better or an abler friend. Few men were ever so sincerely mourned by a larger proportion of the human race.

Having already placed in the chair two Scotchmen, you have now chosen an Irishman. Doubtless, after a becoming interval with native Presidents, you will call an Englishman. My nationality is the principal ground for my having been selected. I have none of the brilliant qualifications of my predecessors. On your invitation I take the position that was intended for a great fellow-countryman of my own. However, I do not question the fitness of your choice, for I am representative in several respects. I was nurtured in the conflict against American slavery. In the words of William Lloyd Garrison, the founder of that movement, “My country is the world; my countrymen are all mankind.” To aid in the elevation of my native land has been the endeavour of my riper years. In the words of Daniel O’Connell, “My

sympathies are not confined to my own green island. I am a friend to civil and religious liberty all over the world." I hate tyranny and oppression wherever practised, more especially if practised by my own Government, for then I am in a measure responsible. I have felt the bitterness of subjection in my own country. I am a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party. I am one of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. I am a Dissenter, proud of the struggles of my Quaker forefathers for freedom of thought and action : a Protestant returned by a Catholic constituency—a Protestant living in a Catholic country, testifying against craven fears of a return to obsolete religious bitterness and intolerance—fears in your country and in mine worked upon to impede the progress of liberty.

To be placed in this chair is the highest honour to which I can ever aspire.

That I have not resided in India is no disqualification. Free peoples are within their own borders the best judges of their own affairs. But where are concerned the interests of a large population governed by a dominant class, the members of that class, whose apparent interests lie in a continuance of that domination, cannot, as a rule, judge fairly. There are rare exceptions, such as Sir William Wedderburn, but generally speaking their vision is obscured by prejudices. West Indian slavery would never have been abolished by West Indian planters, nor American slavery by Southern Whites. Catholics would never have been emancipated in Ireland, the Church would not have been disestablished, or the franchise extended, by that class which was directly interested in the continuance of existing institutions.

Nothing in what I have said or intend to say must, however, be taken to imply a want of appreciation of the character and services of members of my fellow-citizens, whose lives have been and are being given to the administration and government of India. They were doubtless at first attracted to the service solely as a career in life. But residence here, sympathy with your people, and a sense of duty rapidly impel to higher motives. They become sincerely anxious for your welfare, and devoted to what they believe your highest good. Never has more conscience been brought to the government of a conquered country. We here are not set against them, unless, indeed, they are determined to set themselves against us. The services of men of their training, temper, and turn of mind may, perhaps for generations to come, be necessary. They are to be honoured and respected in their sphere. But they must not impede or prevent the gradual application to the government of this country of principles other than those laid down by statesmen of the first rank fully half a century ago. I might perhaps have been more affected than I have been by the attitude and language of many of them regarding your country and your people, were it not that it is such as I have been accustomed to hear from the same class in Ireland regarding my country and my people. If the anticipations of the former regarding your capacities and your future are as fully belied as have been the anticipations of the latter regarding our capacities and our future, you may rest satisfied. Closely allied, in blood and religion, as this class in Ireland has been to us, their efforts to govern independently of Irish opinion have resulted in failure. How much less likely is it that they can succeed here

without availing themselves of your assistance more largely than heretofore.

In our efforts for reform and constitutional liberty much will depend upon individual character and training; upon the extent to which we wisely administer the powers we have. The English are not naturally better or braver than other peoples. They owe their success partly to high average reliability and a high sense of duty. What they personally undertake they usually perform. Like others, they are moved by selfish considerations; but having, in politics or administrative office, once engaged for the public weal, they are not apt to neglect it for private interests; they can rely upon each other. Let us take pattern by them in these respects.

While most anxious not to implicate your cause with Irish politics, or the relations between Great Britain and Ireland, I may occasionally illustrate your affairs by reference to my own country. Your interests are, in fact, closely involved in some effectual settlement of the Irish question. One of your principal and most just complaints is that no sufficient attention is given to your affairs in Parliament. Whilst months are allotted to the consideration of the British budget, a few hours are grudged to yours. Parliament is paralyzed with work. It has undertaken functions it cannot perform. Three separate Parliaments had enough to do to manage the affairs of England, Scotland, and Ireland. They were merged into one when the population of the United Kingdom was only fifteen millions. That population has now risen to thirty-eight millions. Parliament has, moreover, undertaken to care for your two hundred and eighty millions. The sphere of law is

becoming both wider and more minute. Surely Parliament ought to be more of an Imperial, less of a local, assembly! For generations to come, England, the heart of the Empire, must have the preponderating influence in Imperial Councils. That we grant. You, who are Indian, and I, who am Irish, trust that our Imperial rights will not suffer from that preponderating English influence. But at present the Imperial Parliament is occupied largely with the affairs of under five millions of people, and ministries rise and fall with reference to the question of Ireland, and not in connection with great Imperial interests. The entire Empire is concerned in the speedy settlement of the Irish question.

We hold to Imperial unity undisputed and intact. To question this would be idle; we do not question it, nor do we desire to question it. We believe that the period of small states—too often a burden alike to themselves and to the world, with their dissensions and wars—is rapidly passing away, and that a better era is dawning, when, under the ægis of immensely powerful states, the peoples can rest secure and enjoy real liberty. The series of events by which this change has been wrought is sufficiently painful, often unutterably shocking. We may well turn with horror from the record. I, for one, would rather be descended from those who rest in the graves of the conquered than from those who rode with victors. There is no true glory in mere domination. In public places and museums I turn with shame from the pitiful trophies torn from subject peoples. We must, however, accept the conditions of these changes. Let us enjoy their benefits, which are many. After all, the external prestige of nationality is not the impor-

tant consideration. Individual liberty, the wise administration of local affairs, the educating of a responsible population—these are of far greater consequence. And Imperial unity cannot realize its full strength and will not fulfil its true functions until all are trained to enjoy these benefits, and these benefits are extended to all. What man of ordinary intelligence could prefer Russian despotism to British freedom? British power in India will remain invulnerable against foreign aggrandisement so long as you believe that with the spread of modern ideas and education, which are largely due to British rule, will come an extension of English liberty.

There is no possibility of turning back. Once imbue nations with aspirations after progress and enlightenment, they must go forward towards liberty. For fifty years the Anglo-Indian Government has been urging you to educate yourselves, to imbibe principles of constitutional liberty, to obliterate old divisions, to break down caste prejudices, to rise to the level of British citizenship, and to unite for the good of a common country. Taking up Sir William Hunter's *History of the Indian Peoples*, the first sentence that riveted my attention was one in which the hope is expressed that the Anglo-Indian schools would "become the nurseries of a self-respecting nation." The towers of a university were the first object that met my gaze the morning after my arrival in India. Nationality has well been defined in your debates as "The aggregate of those who are citizens of one country," [one definite geographical unit] "subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by



like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of the like burdens. • • It has for its central stock, like the trunk of a tree, the people who have for ages and generations settled and domiciled in a country with more or less ethnic identity at the bottom, and more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation." Those who accept any such definition circle in narrow grooves of thought if they believe that such nationality is inimical to Imperial strength and unity. It may in truth be its outcome and its crown.

Politics are amongst the most ennobling, most comprehensive spheres of human activity, and none should eventually be excluded from their exercise. There is much that is ludicrous, much that is sad, much that is deplorable about them. Yet they remain, and ever will remain, the most effective field upon which to work for the good of our fellows. The political atmosphere, that which we here hope to breathe, is one into which no thought of "greed, or lust, or low ambition" should enter. We desire the good of all. We work for all. No class, however lowly, however despised, must be shut out from our sympathies and our endeavours—from the expectations of that great future towards which we all yearn. We desire not alone the brotherhood of man, but the brotherhood and sisterhood of men and women. For in porportion as men and women sympathize with each other, take part in each other's pursuits, and strive for the common weal, in such proportion is public life elevated and purified. Amongst women are to be found some of your best and most earnest friends in the United Kingdom.

Admitting the paramount necessity for the main-

tenance of the unity of the Empire, we know that all questions relating to arms and the armed forces of the Crown must be treated with circumspection. We must weigh well our words and the difficulties of the situation.

In Ireland during most of my lifetime it has been a penal offence to carry arms without a license, and licenses are strictly guarded. In India you rest under closer restrictions. Some modification of the rules under the Arms Act is necessary, "so as to make them equally applicable to all residents in, or visitors to, India, without distinction of creed, caste, or colour; to ensure the liberal concession of licenses wherever wild animals habitually destroy human life, cattle, or crops; and to make all licenses, granted under the revised rules, of life-long tenure, revocable only on proof of misuse, and valid throughout the provincial jurisdiction in which they are issued." With us the prohibitions are an insult to the soil; with you, to the race.

Nothing is more striking in considering the condition of India than its poverty compared with the wealth of the Western world, especially compared with that of the United Kingdom. (The riches of Great Britain are so enormous that the poverty of Ireland scarcely affects the general average.) The mean annual income of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom has been estimated at £38 14s.; that of the people of India at from Rs. 20 to Rs. 27. Mr. Fowler, in his ministerial statement this year, dwelt upon the comparative lightness of the burthen of Indian taxation contrasted with that of the United Kingdom, forgetting that 5 per cent. on an income of Rs. 20 is a much heavier burthen than  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on £33. It is impossible, upon any basis of fairplay,

to justify debiting you with so many large items, such as the India Office and India Office expenses, recruiting depôts, loss on exchange, and the like, which really form a portion of the British home charges. If the maintenance of the Indian Empire is so essential to British prestige and greatness, if the honour and glory are to be Britain's, surely she, not you, should bear the heavy burdens. She does not attempt to collect similar charges from the Colonies.

The aggregate *annual savings* of the United Kingdom in the years between 1840 and 1888 have been estimated at £110,000,000, or over £300,000 a day. Such accumulations of wealth, combined with parsimonious dealings with poorer peoples, are irreconcilable with real belief in the precepts of righteousness.

The expenditure upon the Army in India, which in 1882-83 stood at Rx. 18,359,000 (including Rx. 17,000 for Afghanistan and Rx. 1,308,000 for Egypt), had in 1893 risen by 27 per cent. to Rx. 23,877,000. Any advantages to be derived from this increased expenditure have not been shared in alike by British and by native troops. The pensions of European officers have been raised 37 per cent., of native officers only 11 per cent. Thirteen per cent. more per man is spent upon the British rank and file; 4 per cent. less per man upon the native rank and file.

Your taxes spent abroad have risen from Rx. 17,369,000 in 1882, by 31 per cent. to Rx. 22,911,000 in 1892. In the former year they amounted to 23 per cent., in the latter to 25 per cent. of your total expenditure. No country could permanently afford such a drain. These increases are not by any means entirely due to alterations in the rate of exchange.

These startling facts demand grave consideration east and west of Suez. Apart from a reference to the daily deteriorating condition of agriculture generally, I am not competent to speak on the state of your peasantry, but so far as all accounts go, official included, there are strong grounds to apprehend danger from the agricultural condition of the country. I am aware that this problem constantly engages the attention of the Supreme Government, and it is to be hoped that it will take a new departure in its policy of land revenue. Mere palliatives will never do. A judicious and statesmanlike survey of the existing situation should enable it to devise a satisfactory remedy. Whatever action may be taken to free the impoverished peasantry from the hands of the money-lenders will go a great way to ameliorate their condition. And Government itself should modify its cast-iron system of exacting revenue at dates at which the cultivators are least prepared to discharge the State dues.

We must, however, not take a gloomy view of the situation. If you have greater difficulties to contend with than we in Ireland, you will remember that your population has been increasing, whilst ours has been reduced by over 40 per cent. within the past half century. Whilst you have lee-way to make up in education and material advancement, your relative progress has been and is out of all proportion to ours.

The justice of, and necessity for, adequate representation in your superior and local Councils is apparent, and naturally claims much of your attention. The administrative mutilation of the manifest intentions of Parliament in framing the Indian Councils Act is much to be deplored. I see that complaints have been made in every province where the enlarged

Councils are established, that the distribution of seats for representation of the people is most unsatisfactory ; and that, while some interests are over-represented, other important interests are not represented at all. This is not in accordance with the expressed views of British statesmen on both sides of the House when the Bill was discussed. Mr. Gladstone said : "I believe I am justified in looking forward, not merely to a nominal, but to a real living representation of the people of India." Lord Salisbury was no less emphatic : "If we are to do it, and if it has to be done, let us do it systematically \* \* taking care that the machinery to be provided shall effect the purpose of giving representation, not to accidentally constituted bodies, not to small sections of the people here and there, but to the living strength and vital forces of the whole community of India." How little have these anticipations been realized ! We have here a striking instance of the extent to which administration can defeat the intentions of legislation.

It is indeed almost more necessary for the contentment of a people that they should have the administration rather than the enactment of the laws in their own hands. It is, moreover, desirable that judicial should, as far as possible, be separated from executive functions, and that civil and military employments in medical and other departments should not be held by the same persons. The average military officer, supreme in his own sphere, is of all others least suited by his training to administer civil affairs in a sympathetic and conciliatory spirit. And it has been well said—"The frame of mind necessary for an executive officer and the frame of mind necessary for a judge are different. Executive officers ought to mix freely

with the people, they ought to try to make friends with them, they ought to see this, and they ought to see that. A judge, on the contrary, ought to shut his ears against everything except that which comes before him in court. But an executive officer has, as such, to learn everything and to do everything, and when he comes upon the bench he is expected to divest his mind of whatever he has heard elsewhere. Even the best officer of Government is after all a human being."

You have properly protested against the curtailment of your rights regarding trial by jury. Whether we compare the number of convictions before and since the institution of the system thirty years ago, or the state of affairs in districts where it was not established with that where it was established, there appears nothing to justify recent changes. Officials sometimes forget that the general attitude of the people towards the law is of more consequence than the number of malefactors sentenced. It is an old principle of English jurisprudence that it is better that many guilty should escape than that one innocent man should suffer. Love of law, the conception that it is for the good of all—so deeply implanted in the hearts of sovereign peoples, who have been able to mould it to their will—is naturally a plant of slow growth with peoples less favoured.

Regarding criminal procedure in India, the public conscience at home has been from time to time outraged by instances that have reached us of what appeared to be undue partiality towards Europeans. A number of such cases have been well summed up in a book by Ram Gopal Sanyal, recently published in Calcutta. The Dum Dum and the Guntakal cases appeared to many of us in Parliament disastrous mis-

carriages of justice, detrimental to British prestige, the outcome of that brutal contempt for your people, which is, unhappily, still characteristic of many ignorant and prejudiced Europeans, and the product of that race hatred which it ought to be the Government's first care to stamp out. Even the appearance or suspicion of judging the efficiency of magistrates and police by their success in securing convictions should be avoided. We all hope that the Government of India, whose desire for impartiality and justice we all admit, is keenly alive to these evils, and will try its best to consider favourably your representations on the subject. I trust that ere long they may be removed.

Meanwhile let us not embitter our lives or weaken our energies for practical work. Human justice is after all fallible justice. We all fall short where our own interests are concerned! Let what we believe to be injustice by others impel us to higher standards, to nobler ideals of life, to wider charity and forgiveness, to deeper trust in an Omniscience that will yet right every wrong and wipe the tear from every eye.

We rejoiced at the adoption of Mr. Paul's motion regarding Simultaneous Examinations; still more at the frank spirit in which it appeared to have been accepted by the Government. We thought it a great step forward—a solid advantage gained. We have been correspondingly disappointed by the extent to which official counsels have since prevailed, even to the reversal, by a Liberal Cabinet, of the solemn decision then arrived at. Such vacillation tends to weaken the power of the House of Commons. We have lately seen it instanced as a reason why the Upper Chamber should properly set at naught the resolution of the Lower. When public opinion has secured the accept-

ance by the House of such a great principle, it has a right to consider its work accomplished. I but voice the pain which this proceeding has caused to many of the most ardent supporters of the Government.

Upon the other hand, few actions of the present Government are more indicative of the progress of liberal ideas than the recent convention with Japan for the abolition of consular jurisdiction. This convention may not be without hopeful significance regarding your future. How comes it that powers over British citizens, which it is considered inexpedient to accord to Indian judges trained in British law, have freely, and almost without comment, been granted to judges in Japan ?

The education of the people claims the first attention of Government now-a-days. I regret that in your case the expenditure thereupon bears such a small proportion to that for military purposes. We must, however, individually bear in mind—at least with us in the United Kingdom there is need to bear in mind—that education in itself confers no special claim to employment by the State. Education fits us for life and enables us the better to use and to enjoy life. It widens our horizon. But we must not expect too much from it. It should be a blessing to all ; it might easily be a curse to some, if it spoiled them for the proper discharge of the simple duties that come nearest to them.

I desire now to refer to three subjects—Drink, the Regulation of Vice, and Opium—which have more particularly interested many British friends of India. In this connection I must confess that, as a member of a professedly Christian land, I am almost ashamed to stand before you. Christians claim to carry a message of love and enlightenment to the



world. You and we have come together; and what have been the consequences? Have you wronged us, or have we wronged you? Have you, for individual gain, forced ruin and demoralization upon us, or have we forced them upon you? These questions carry their own answers. We owe our highest civilization and culture originally to the East. In return we have handed back some benefits, but also some of the lowest products of Western civilization.

As to the Drink curse (largely introduced and widely extended by us), there have been repeated denunciations in your debates. It has formed the subject of a resolution at more than one Congress. The spread in India of this evil is fully discussed in the debate on the "Reform in excise administration" at your Sixth and Eighth Congresses. It is deplorable to hear that "people have become more addicted to drink, because it has been thought to be an adjunct of Western civilization;" that "it has been left for [your] Christian rulers to love it, stimulate it, and pet it, and make money by millions of pounds out of it." In this Presidency the excise licenses appear to have increased fivefold within forty years. I understand that in India as a whole they have doubled within twenty years. The East India Company, ostensibly at least, strove to reduce consumption. Can we believe that such is the object of Government at the present day? There is scarcely a family in the United Kingdom that has not suffered from the ravages of drink. I am one of those who believe that safety only lies in complete abstinence. To many peoples our introduction of it has meant annihilation. You cannot be too much upon your guard against its insidious advances. I rejoice that

the attention you have given to the subject has already contributed, in the Madras Presidency alone, to the closure of thousands of liquor shops. In such respects as these I have long been of the opinion that the crimes committed by society through Government against the people are often greater and less excusable and more disgraceful to character than the worst crimes ever committed by the people against society and against Government. The former are deliberate and far-reaching. In a certain sense they are without justification, and every citizen is responsible. The latter have generally been committed by the irresponsible few in moments of excitement.

With regard to the odious Cantonment Acts, your testimony has been clear and true. At Allahabad, in 1888, you unanimously resolved—"That this Congress, having watched with interest and sympathy the exertions that are being made in England for the total abrogation of laws and rules relating to the regulation of prostitution by the State in India, places on record its appreciation of the services thus rendered to this country, and its desire to co-operate by all means in its power in the attainment of this laudable object." This must have had considerable influence with the Home Government in the changes which it has prescribed and which the Government in India is now so tardily carrying out. The history of this question is most significant from the 9th July, 1887, when Lord Cross telegraphed to the Viceroy: "I apprehend system is indefensible and must be condemned," till 11th August, 1893, when Lord Roberts had the manliness to apologize to Mrs. Andrews and Dr. Kate Bushnell for having denied the accuracy of their revelations upon the subject.

But for the ability and devotion of these American ladies, officials would still conceal the truth from the British public, as they managed to conceal it even from the responsible head of a responsible department. What a commentary upon Indian administration! What an argument for local representation! That system of administration is indeed faulty which admits of simply docketing, without obeying, instructions that do not meet the approval of officials. It is easy, but cannot be permanent. For the first time—I say it without meaning offence—the methods of the Indian administration have been fully exposed, and since they have been detected in one particular, we at home must beware of too blindly trusting them in others.

To Opium I find little reference in your proceedings. It is a subject which engages the attention of many of the more thoughtful and conscientious of your friends. There are difficulties surrounding it. No doubt, we in the United Kingdom for our own purposes encouraged the use of the drug, spread its cultivation, and forced it upon China. How are we to retrace our steps? Certainly not at your expense. The decrease of the revenue from this source by 16 per cent. within the past ten years is a warning that such revenue cannot permanently be depended upon. Consideration for the rights of your independent states complicates the problem. I cannot here initiate discussion upon it. Your business for this session is already planned and cannot be altered. However, at some time your knowledge and advice would be helpful to those of us in the United Kingdom who desire to do our duty in this matter.

The reforms we desire are not likely to be accomplished, your cause cannot be effectually pleaded,

until you are satisfactorily represented alike in your Provincial Councils and in the Imperial Parliament. In proportion as each class and each interest within the United Kingdom has been enabled to make its voice heard in the Imperial Parliament, in just such proportion has that assembly been strengthened and dignified. That strength and that dignity will undoubtedly at some period be increased by representation from the component parts of the Empire. If the Empire is, as we believe it to be, one and indivisible, one indivisible spirit of liberty must pervade every portion of it. If all cannot eventually be raised to one level, all may equally be lowered. If absolutism is necessary here, absolutism will certainly taint and ultimately undermine the fabric of English liberty. Already the workings of ascendancy in India have not been without their influence in retarding steady liberal progress in the United Kingdom.

I have thus ventured, within the short time at my disposal, to lay before you my views regarding the questions that have most engaged your attention and are likely again to come up for discussion. You may the better appreciate the spirit in which I landed upon your shores and in which I shall follow your debates.

We may proceed to our task with hope and confidence. Within the lifetime of a generation you have obtained what may be regarded as the first instalment of reform, in the direction of the expansion and reconstruction of the Legislative Councils, which has cost other countries centuries of toil and effort. You have every reason to be proud of what you have achieved in other directions. You must not be cooled by temporary discouragements, by the unfaithfulness of some, the want of faith of the many. Reform progresses like the steady rise of the tide through

many an ebb and flow of the waves. Confident are we that through all storm and cloud the sun of constitutional liberty will yet shine with pure and beneficent effulgence upon your country. Let it be your individual care to carry back from these Congresses, into every-day life and every-day occupations, true elevation of mind, belief in your future, and your own power to mould your future. This future depends more upon yourselves than upon any political or financial changes. Before all you must cultivate a spirit of generous toleration and of charity between class and class and creed and creed.

Considering the general advancement of the world, from which no portion of its surface can be permanently excluded, we have every cause for encouragement, every incentive to press forward, setting no limits to the possible material and spiritual advancement of mankind. Never before were men and women so alive to their capabilities and to their responsibilities towards each other. Let us advance together in ever-widening combinations, with ever-broadening hopes, labouring for the good of all.

“ For oh ! it were a gallant deed  
To show before mankind,  
How every race and every creed  
Might be by love combined—  
Might be combined, yet not forget  
The fountains whence they rose  
As, filled by many a rivulet,  
The stately” Ganges “ flows.”

One of your sages has compared the soul of man to a bird, and earthly existence to the period marked by its flight through a room—out of the limitable into the illimitable. By devoting ourselves to the good of others we can best occupy that brief space. The wise assertion of common rights is enlightened altruism.

Here I brought to a conclusion this address, as, with the exception of a few sentences, I had prepared it in Ireland and on the ocean. Since then I have landed in India, have seen some of your schools and colleges, have lingered in the crowded streets of your cities, have listened to the hum of your manufacturing, have talked with your leaders, have watched the sun rise and set on the plains where such a large proportion of your population hardly wring their living from the soil. I now somewhat realize the surpassing beauty of your land. I have met you here face to face. How faint and weak, how inadequate to the expression of my inmost feelings is what I have written and spoken. Apart from those family and national ties, which to each one of us are the first of life's blessings—the choicest gifts of God—I regard this visit to India, and permission to take part in the proceedings of this great assemblage, as the highest privilege, and one that cannot but profoundly influence my remaining years. So far, two convictions before all others, press themselves upon me. The one: the greatness, apart from its inception and much of its history, of the mission of the United Kingdom in this land; the other: that this Congress movement is the necessary and logical outcome, the richest fruit of that noble mission, of which we citizens of the United Kingdom should be proud. You yourselves are taking up the work—the work which you and you alone can ultimately perfect—"the eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or national prejudices amongst all lovers of your country." This is in truth the greatest combined peaceful effort for the good of the largest number of the human race that history has recorded. (*Loud and long continued cheers.*)

## THE PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING SPEECH.

FRIENDS and FELLOW-SUBJECTS,—I address you in the same terms with which I commenced my opening address a few days ago, but I would add now, dear friends and dear fellow-subjects, I have felt quite overpowered by your kindness and consideration since I came to this country, and I feel additionally overpowered by this renewed mark of your kind feelings towards me. At this late hour of the evening it is quite impossible for me to do justice to such a Resolution as that which has now been passed. In so far as my efforts to conduct this Congress in a proper and dignified manner have been successful, in so far it has been owing to your good feeling and to the help and consideration that I have received from you. It has been particularly due to the kind friends that have sat round this table, and to whom I have constantly been able to appeal for advice and assistance. In returning thanks I may surely, on behalf of the delegates, return thanks to the Madras Reception Committee, the chairman and the members for their reception and entertainment of us all. Whilst it would be impossible to name all those to whom we are under obligations, I cannot, on my own account, refrain from referring to a few. I should like to name Messrs. P. Rungiah Naidu, Ananda Charlu, Sankara Nair, G. Parameswaram Pillai, Viraraghava Chariar, and J. Goshal ; and, in addition to these gentlemen, I desire to thank the Volunteers for the help that they have given. (*Hear, hear.*) In remarking upon the splendid arrangements made here, I am sure they are largely due to the Volunteers, and on my own account—an old man who has come amongst you—I feel as if they had treated me with

almost filial attention and kindness. I feel it very deeply, and I shall never forget their kindness to me here. In so far, gentlemen, as there has been any friction here, in so far as any one may feel hurt by my hastiness in the chair, or cutting them short (*No, no!*)—anything of that kind is entirely due to myself; I alone am responsible for it, and I am sure you will make every allowance. What I have particularly admired in this assemblage has been the manly spirit—the manly spirit of your delegates—the spirit in which you have spoken out for your country, the manly and loyal spirit which cannot but in the end prevail. I should like to urge this upon you—the keeping down of all class or local differences. These have not indeed been apparent in my private conversations with members of every class and from all districts. In the house, as well as here, I have never found an inkling of that, and I would beg of you, if ever a shade or a shadow of such suspicions enter your hearts, put them from you. Everyone here has been actuated by a sincere desire to serve, not party, or caste, or district, but your common and beloved country. (*Loud cheers.*)

There is one other request—prayer I might almost say—that I would desire to urge upon you, that you should put from you the demon of personality. Never in your sittings let the question of personality enter into your proceedings. Everyone here has common rights, and is entitled to take part in the proceedings of the Congress. No one has a higher idea than myself of the necessity that there is of entering upon political objects in a high and pure spirit—that great objects are best obtained by good men. I cannot refrain from repeating the lines of an Irish poet, referring to the spirit of nationality.



**He says:—**

It whisper'd too, that Freedom's ark,  
A service high and holy,  
Should not be marr'd by passions dark,  
And feelings vain and lowly.  
For Freedom comes from God's right hand,  
And needs a goodly train ;  
And righteous men must make our land  
A nation once again.

True, gentlemen, but we cannot judge anyone here. It is for districts and for the constituencies to judge as to the proper men to send up, but once here they must be received on a footing of equality. (*Cheers.*) Gentlemen, I do entreat that you should press forward. Do not so much consider how soon you are going to obtain your objects. You have already obtained an absolute good in holding these Congresses. Were the whole of this Congress movement to be swept away, it would leave memories that would never die. You have already attained a great good ; this movement can never die. You yourselves are scarcely aware how much you have gained in advancing the spirit of unity and love. Press forward ! Keep up your movement ! (*Loud cheers.*)

Gentlemen, perhaps now I might say a few words in reference to myself. Might I make a confession, I never felt so lonely the last thirty or forty years of my life as I did on the steamer coming here. But the moment I touched the shore at Bombay those feelings vanished, and the moment I reached the station here all misgivings faded away, and I felt renewed with a strong spirit. I felt no misgivings as to my ability to take this chair. (*Cheers.*)

Now, gentlemen, it is with a feeling of intense sadness that I here bid you good-bye. You are all

young and hearty, and you will meet again and again in these Congresses; but I am an old man (*No, no*), and in a very few days the heavy curtain of 6,000 miles will pass down between us. My earnest hope is that I shall see you again, and again take part in your proceedings. (*Hear, hear.*) But, however this may be, gentlemen, I shall always regard this as one of the greatest—I may say one of the happiest—experiences of my life. It has doubled my responsibilities, and with feelings that I cannot properly give expression to, I beg to thank you most heartily for the kind resolution you have passed to-day. (*Loud and enthusiastic cheers.*)

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# SPEECH

BY

MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.,

AT THE

## FIFTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

HELD AT BOMBAY ON THE 28TH DECEMBER, 1889.

### XI.

*"The sun's rays grow as the sun rises. You are the dawn; I see the day, and do not count the rays which are yet below the horizon. But I count the gilding of the clouds I see from the rays I do not yet see."*

*"I am here because I believe you loyal to the law which I am bound to support. I am here because I believe you wish, as we in England have done, to win within the limits of the constitution the most perfect equality and right for all."*

*"I would say to you, men with race traditions and caste views and religious differences—that in a great Empire like ours all we have the right to is equality before the law for all, equality of opportunity for all, equality of expression for all, penalty on none, favouritism to none, and I believe that in this great Congress I see the germ of that which may be as fruitful as the most hopeful tree that grows under your sun."*

FRIENDS, FELLOW-SUBJECTS, and FELLOW-CITIZENS, (*cheers*)—I address you as friends, for the greeting you have given me entitles me to use the same language to you as I would use to those at home. (*Loud cheers.*) You have made me feel, since I have been in Bombay, that the word home has a wider significance than I have given it. I have learned that if I have only a little home, I have a larger one in

your sympathies and in your affections, and, as I trust to deserve by future work, in your love. I address you as fellow-subjects; we are here loyal to one rule with the best of loyalty. (*Cheers.*) That is no real loyalty which is only blind submission. (*Cheers.*) Real loyalty means that the governed help the governors by leaving little for the Government to do. Real loyalty means that the claim of right is made with the consciousness of duty; and I feel proud to be a fellow-subject with you in the hope that the phrase fellow-citizens may grow into a reality even before my life-time ends. (*Cheers.*) I pray your indulgence to-night, for it is the first speech I have made since I looked into the blackness of the grave, and I am not sure how far I can trust my tongue to interpret what I would wish to say. Of one thing I am sure, you have over-rated alike my work and my ability. (*No, no.*) I pray you, be as indulgent to me as you have been generous; and if you disagree with what I say, let me say it in my own poor fashion, so that you may find at least my meaning clear to you. I am only here as a visitor by your courtesy, a member of a great assembly, the mother of Parliaments in the world, of which I am one of the poorest members; and as to any force that I may have had in advocating the cause of those to whom I belong at home, let me say I was sorry to hear that I was thanked for my work in the popular cause. For whom should I work if not for the people? Born of the people, trusted by the people, I will die of the people. (*Cheers.*) And I know no geographical or race limitations. If the nationality—pardon the word—to which I am proud to belong, has raised its Empire, the rule carries with it the duty on the part

of every citizen to recognize that which I recognize in you, lawful constitutional association for the assertion of your just claims and for the advancement of your homes and interests. (*Cheers.*)

I will ask you not to expect too much. One man is only a water drop in the ocean of human life: you are the breeze driving the water drop on the western side of the seas, and by your encouragement, adding others to it, and giving it a force that shall wash it into the old rock of prejudice that hindered; you will make those on the other side hear, as I have heard, the clear English sounds which show that you share our language, our traditions, and our hopes, and are willing to work with us and to make common cause with us. (*Cheers.*)

Not only do not expect too much, but do not expect all at once. Great as this assembly is in its suggestiveness, by its delegates travelling hundreds and thousands of miles, you are yet only the water drop of the two hundred and ten millions whom you number under our Empire, yours and mine—not mine against yours, not English against Indian, but our common Empire for common purposes. (*Cheers.*) Don't be disappointed if of a just claim only some thing is conceded. It is new but shall be every day coming; it is new but you have those who stand in the House of Commons to plead for you; not I alone, but members as devoted to you as I can possibly be; and I hope soon to see added to their ranks, with the authority of his knowledge and of the position which his presiding here has given him—Sir William Wedderburn. (*Cheers.*) I would remind you, as an encouragement to you to be patient, that in England great reforms have always been slowly won. Those

who first enterprised them were called seditious, and sometimes sent to jail as criminals, but the speech and thought live on. No imprisonment can crush a truth ; it may hinder it for the moment, it may delay it for an hour, but it gets an electric elasticity inside the dungeon walls, and it grows and moves the whole world when it comes out. (*Cheers.*) Your presence here to-day confutes and answers in anticipation one sneer that I have heard spoken within the walls of Parliament. It is said, "There is no Indian Nation, there can be no Indian National Congress ; there is no Indian People, there are only two hundred millions of diverse races and diverse creeds." The lesson I read here is that this Congress movement is an educational movement, hammering upon the anvil of millions of men's brains until it welds into one common whole men, whose desire for political and social reforms is greater than all distinctions of race and creed. (*Cheers.*)

It will be my duty, as it is my right, to present to Parliament, directly I get back, on the very day of its opening, the claim you make to have the Bill considered. On the second day the Bill will be introduced. For so much I can answer, but I can answer for nothing more. I think it is possible the Government may introduce some Bill themselves. If they do, it will take precedence of, but it will not avoid, the one you have charged me with ; because the Government Bill in Committee will come to the discussion of Parliament on every one of the propositions that you desire in the Bill you have charged me with. It is not easy work. There are differences ; and I have been glad to see that you can meet and discuss differences as you have done. You have shown that you can meet together and listen to one another, and that you are worthy of

